

THIRTEENTH
GIORGIO LEVI DELLA VIDA
BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

The Persian presence
in the
Islamic world

EDITED BY
RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN
AND
GEORGES SABAGH

The Persian presence in the Islamic world

HOVANNISIAN AND SABAGH

CAMBRIDGE

THIRTEENTH GIORGIO LEVI DELLA VIDA BIENNIAL
CONFERENCE

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The thirteenth volume based on the Giorgio Levi Della Vida conference series at UCLA assesses the role played by the Iranian peoples in the development and consolidation of Islamic civilization. In his key chapter, Ehsan Yarshater casts fresh light on that role, challenging the view that, after reaching a climax in Baghdad in the ninth century, Islamic culture entered a period of stagnation and decline. In fact, he maintains, a new and remarkably creative phase began in Khurasan and Transoxania, symbolized by the adoption of Persian as the medium of literary expression. Persian literary and intellectual paradigms and a mystical world-view spread from Anatolia to India. By the mid-sixteenth century, they were being supported and cultivated in the three empires that encompassed the greater part of the Islamic world: the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Mughal. Professor Yarshater also challenges some traditional assumptions and recent claims about the "Islamization of Persia" or "Persianization of Islam."

In the chapters which follow, six distinguished scholars consider the historical, cultural, and religious aspects of the Persian presence in Islamic civilization.

Richard G. Hovannisian is Professor of History and the Holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Armenian History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Georges Sabagh is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

GIORGIO LEVI DELLA VIDA CONFERENCES

Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies
University of California, Los Angeles

THIRTEENTH CONFERENCE

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The Giorgio Levi Della Vida Medal of the Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, is awarded biennially to an outstanding scholar whose work has significantly and lastingly advanced the study of Islamic civilization. The scholar is selected by a committee appointed by the chancellor of the University of California, Los Angeles, meeting under the chairmanship of the director of the Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies.

The award carries with it a bronze medal and a prize of money, together with the obligation to present in person a formal lecture as part of a conference at the University of California, Los Angeles. The recipient of the award chooses the theme of the conference and selects the other participants. The proceedings of each conference are published in a special series, of which this volume is the thirteenth.

The first award was made in May 1967 to Professor Robert Brunschvig of the Sorbonne. Subsequent recipients have been Professors Joseph Schacht of Columbia University (1969), Francesco Gabrieli of the University of Rome (1971), Gustave E. von Grunebaum of the University of California, Los Angeles (1973, posthumously), Shlomo Dov Goitein of Princeton University (1975), Franz Rosenthal of Yale University (1977), Albert Hourani of the University of Oxford (1979), W. Montgomery Watt of the University of Edinburgh (1981), Fazlur Rahman of the University of Chicago (1983), Charles Issawi of Princeton University (1985), Annemarie Schimmel of Harvard University (1987), André Miquel of the Collège de France (1989), and Ehsan Yarshater of Columbia University (1991).

*The Persian presence in the
Islamic world*

EDITED BY
RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN
University of California, Los Angeles
and
GEORGES SABAGH
University of California, Los Angeles

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In elaborating and amplifying the paper that I read at the conference on the Persian Presence in the Islamic World, I have deliberately drawn on the writings of many scholars who have addressed the various aspects of the question so as to give at the same time not only my own view of the subject, but a more comprehensive picture of the scholarly opinion. Hence, a fairly large number of citations.

I have not sought to cover Persian contributions, as such, to Islamic civilization. Thus, Arabic translations from Middle Persian, the Persian share in the development of Arabic *adab* and wisdom literature, or the actual contributions of scholars such as Abū Ma'shar of Balk or Avicenna, or Rāzī, or Bīrūnī, or Omar Khayyam remain outside the scope of my chapter. I hope, however, that I have addressed the major issues concerning the function and place of Persia in the Islamic world.

References are generally given in short titles; full titles and other publication details will be found in the Bibliography at the end of the chapter.

Ehsan Yarshater

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies for graciously bestowing on me the Giorgio Levi Della Vida Medal for Islamic Studies in 1991. I should like also to record my thanks to my colleagues Professors C. Edmund Bosworth, Gerhard Böwering, Gerhard Doerfer, Oleg Grabar, and George Saliba for agreeing to present papers at the conference on "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World" organized by the Center.

I am indebted to Professor Franz Rosenthal, who kindly agreed to read the greater part of my chapter and from whose erudition and bibliographical conversance I have benefited. Needless to say, this does not associate him in any way with the ideas expressed in my chapter; all its shortcomings remain mine. I should like to thank also Professor Ahmad Ashraf for helping me secure a number of books which were not easily accessible. I am thankful to Dina Amin for her editorial assistance and to Samara Zwanger and Jorge Coronado for their care in the typing of the manuscript, and to Farshad Mamudi for compiling the index. Last, but not least, I am grateful to Professors Amin Banani, Richard Hovannisian, Georges Sabagh, and Speros Vryonis, Jr. for their encouragement and support.

Presentation of award to thirteenth recipient, EHSAN YARSHATER

GEORGES SABAGH
University of California, Los Angeles

Professor Ehsan Yarshater is the distinguished recipient of the thirteenth prestigious Giorgio Levi Della Vida Award in Islamic Studies. For more than thirty years, Professor Yarshater has been the single most creative force in Iranian studies in the Western world, and he is a prodigious scholar of great intellectual standing in his field. Considering that Los Angeles has the largest Iranian community in the United States, it is particularly appropriate that we at the University of California, Los Angeles, honor one of the most eminent contributors to and interpreters of Iranian history, literature, and culture.

A native of Hamadan, Iran, Professor Yarshater received a doctorate from the University of Tehran in 1947 and a Ph.D. from the University of London in 1960. After teaching pre-Islamic Iranian languages at the University of Tehran, he was appointed, in 1961, Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies at Columbia University. He chaired the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures from 1968 to 1973, and since 1966 has served as Director of Columbia's Center for Iranian Studies.

Professor Yarshater stands at the top of a broad field of research that spans Iranian studies from the pre-Islamic period across the entire Islamic era. Among his many achievements are his ongoing efforts as editor and founder, in 1974, of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and as organizer and editor of the annotated translations of Tabari's monumental *History*. He is also the founding editor of the Persian Text Series, the Persian Heritage Series, the Persian Studies Series, and Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies. The many other publications that he has authored or edited include *A Grammar of Southern Tati Dialects*, *Iran Faces the Seventies*, *Highlights of Persian Art* (with Richard Ettinghausen), volume 3 of the *Cambridge History of Iran*, and *Persian Literature*.

The theme of the conference, "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World," reflects Professor Yarshater's view that a comprehensive understanding of Islamic culture and its brilliance requires the study of Persian literature, art, ethical wisdom, and mystical thought. Professor Yarshater invited a number of distinguished scholars to address with him the many facets of this theme ranging from poetry, mysticism, and language to painting, historiography, and astronomy. Two of these scholars, Annemarie Schimmel and Oleg Grabar, are themselves recipients of the Giorgio Levi Della Vida Award in Islamic Studies. The others include C. Edmund Bosworth of the University of Manchester, Gerhard Böwering of Yale University, Gerhard Doerfer of Göttingen University, and George Saliba of Columbia University.

Introduction

AMIN BANANI

In the thirty-year-long history of the distinguished recipients of the Giorgio Levi Della Vida Award no one has more clearly deserved the honor than Professor Ehsan Yarshater, on the criterion of dominating his broad field of scholarship. Ranging in competence across the entire spectrum of Iranian studies from classical philology to contemporary literature, his incisive and elegant scholarship continues to enrich the field. After receiving a doctorate in classical Persian literature of the Islamic period from the University of Tehran, Yarshater obtained another doctorate from the University of London in classical philology and pre-Islamic studies under Professor W. B. Henning. This traditional learning with its thorough emphasis on Arabic and Persian primary sources combined with a critical, analytic Western training is what sets Ehsan Yarshater apart from his contemporaries.

His prolific publications, ranging over the entire span of Iranian civilization, include pioneer and original contributions on such diverse topics as the decline of classical Persian poetry in the fifteenth century and the origins of the Mazdakite movement in the Sassanian era. His tireless and pioneering efforts on behalf of the organization, professionalization, systematization, institutionalization and dissemination of knowledge in all fields related to Iranian studies include the founding and editorship of the journal *Rahnama-ye Ketab*, the establishment and directorship of the Foundation for Translation and Publication of Books, the creation and editorship of the Persian Text Series, the Persian Heritage Series, and the contemporary Persian Literature Series, membership of the editorial boards of the *Corpus inscriptorum Iranicarum*, *The Cambridge History of Iran* (general editorship of the third volume of which stands as a signal monument to his scholarship), and the Tabari Translation Project.

The crowning edifice of Ehsan Yarshater's labors is the prodigious production of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, by far the single most

significant scholarly enterprise in the realm of Iranian studies undertaken anywhere at any time. Drawing upon the most competent expertise of scholars in the world, the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is the most substantive work of Middle Eastern scholarship ever undertaken in the United States. At a time when cross-currents of adverse influences bode ill for the recognition, fair appraisal, and even survival of much that is the gift of Iranian culture to the legacy of human civilization, this encyclopedia lays the groundwork for the systematic preservation and appreciation of that gift.

The enormous boldness of Ehsan Yarshater in undertaking the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is reflected in his choice of theme for the thirteenth biennial Giorgio Levi Della Vida conference. At a time when the deadly virus of modern chauvinism invades and infects so much of our scholarly pursuits, to seek a forum and gather a group of fellow scholars to discuss "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World" is an act of daring. To do so with scrupulous care, with commendable fairness, and free of unwarranted ethnocentric bias is a mark of integrity.

For nearly the entire span of Islamic history the synergy of the integrative Islamic religion and the diverse cultural components that entered into the lives of Muslim communities from the Indian subcontinent to the Iberian peninsula have given rise to dynamic debates and tensions. Under the impact of twentieth-century nationalism these debates are easily and banefully misinterpreted. The early cultural clash of Arab tribal vanity and Persian bureaucratic snobbery that was the substance of the Shu'ūbiyya debate has been depicted as national antagonism, and modern chauvinistic perceptions have been projected back into anachronistic contexts.

The tendentious misreadings of earlier ages have been exacerbated by the inherent preconceptions and assumptions of modern orientalism. Western scholarly focus upon the Middle East, beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing into the mid twentieth century, has been filtered through overt or unconscious layers of religious polemics and/or racist supremacy created to justify European imperialist hegemony over the globe. In this perspective Islam was first excoriated as an inferior false faith. As the sources of Islamic culture were identified and studied, the tendency shifted to attribute the formative elements in the dynamic Muslim civilization to neighboring and older civilizations, primarily those of Greece, Persia, and India. The romantic European philhellenism of the nineteenth century which identified Greece as the source of Western genius gave a strong impetus to this tendency. The contributions of Greek thought to Islamic philosophy and science became the primary focus

of European orientalists. Just as romanticized philhellenism fed the drive to highlight the role of ancient Greece in the formation of Islamic civilization, a more pernicious late nineteenth-century European idea – the superiority of the Aryan race – helped to focus upon Persia and India.

So far as Persia was concerned, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Western scholarship, racist motivations notwithstanding, made outstanding contributions to the knowledge of ancient and pre-Islamic Iran. Still scholars could bemoan the fact, as the anthropologist Berthold Laufer did in the introduction to his wonderful book *Sino-Iranica*, that "If we knew as much about the culture of ancient Iran as about ancient Egypt or Babylonia, or even as much as about India or China, our notions of cultural development in Asia would probably be widely different from what they are at present."

The ebb and flow of underlying ideological currents in Western orientalism had its backlash against the prominence of Persia in the make-up of Islamic civilization. Concurrently with the spread of European imperialist penetration of north Africa and western Asia, a romantic championing of the Arab "noble savage" became the vogue. Few European Islamists paid attention to the world of Islam beyond the Arab lands. Thus, Persia and her presence in the world of Islamic culture became a double victim of European racist tendencies and the subsequent neglect of Arabist and Islamist orientalists.

Western scholarship now gives the promise of outgrowing its racist and imperialist context, but the regrettable reflection of those attitudes in the Middle East still casts an ominous shadow. Prevailing attitudes among Arabs, Turks, and Persians reflect the ludicrous notions of racial purity and superiority, and much scholarship is contaminated by them. Hyperbolic claims of ethnic supremacy paraded as "Arabism," "Turkism," or "Aryan Purity" are always accompanied by thinly veiled animosity toward neighbors and depreciation of their cultural merit. Whether by overt cultural policies or by covert financial inducements such partisan tendencies are even promoted in some American and European academies.

It is against this disturbing background that the present volume stands as a model of scholarly integrity and objectivity. No Persian chauvinist will find in it comfort for his exaggerated and ahistorical views. But all readers will gain a finer appreciation of the quality of the offerings which the Persians have brought to the banquet of Islamic civilization, and through it, to the world of humanity.

1 · The Persian presence in the Islamic world

EHSAN YARSHATER

Columbia University

To the memory of Aḥmad Tafazzolī (1937–1997)

I General: scholarly opinion in the East and West

The prevailing view of the development of Islamic civilization has been a relatively simple one. Islam was born at an opportune moment, when the two superpowers of the seventh century, the Persian and Byzantine empires, had been exhausted by protracted war, heavy taxes, and the abuses of royal and sacerdotal powers and had become paralyzed by their inner contradictions. The Arabs, inspired by a fervent faith and charismatic leadership, overran the crumbling Persian empire and much of the Byzantine territory as well. The victorious Arab armies suddenly found themselves masters of a vast and expanding empire in which the conquered populations became united by a universal religion, Islam, and an official language, Arabic. Within a short span of time the Muslims gave rise to a new, dynamic civilization, to which the conquered peoples contributed their lore and learning, their political experience, and their cultural traditions.¹

The different contributions that were synthesized in Islamic civilization have been closely studied and much debated. Three stand out: the Arab, the Persian, and the Hellenistic, though there were others as well. The Arab element provided the faith, the common language, and the theocratic leadership. The Hellenistic component, transmitted chiefly by Syriac-speaking people, was confined mainly to philosophy and the natural sciences; Greek *belles-lettres* and religious

beliefs played no part in the Islamic world. The Persian component was more varied, encompassing religious thought, political theory and practice, administrative models, literature, the sciences, and morals and manners.²

The classical phase of Islamic civilization began at Medina, was nourished in Damascus, and reached its apogee in Baghdad in the ninth century. In the tenth century or a little later, however, "classical" Islamic civilization began to lose its inner strength and cohesiveness. Stagnation led to decline, and the ground was prepared for the immolation of the caliphate and the devastation of the greater part of the Muslim Middle East by pagan Mongol hordes in the thirteenth century. The fall of Baghdad in 1258 marked not only the death knell of the Abbasid caliphate but also the end of an era.

Assuming that this general outline is valid, the task before me is to elucidate and characterize the share of the Persians and Persian traditions in the formation and development of Islamic civilization. In addressing this task I face a dilemma, however. Underscoring the significance of the Persian element may appear to minimize the contribution of other peoples, yet in attempting to avoid bias I run the risk of failing to do justice to my subject. Achieving the proper balance is all the more difficult in these times, when the strains of the present are so often projected on to the past, and regional pride has tended to color academic debate. Nevertheless, I shall attempt to present here a judicious assessment of the Persian presence in the Islamic world. In the process I hope to offer much-needed correction to some common assumptions.

While I was preparing my presentation for the conference, I thought about the consensus on the Persian share in Islamic civilization that emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century and has frequently been discussed and written about since. First, the richness of pre-Islamic Persian experience was recognized: the religious traditions, ethical wisdom, myths and legends, historical accounts, statecraft, administrative and fiscal organization, and manners and court etiquette, most of which were incorporated into early Islamic civilization through the translation of Persian works and the direct influence of Persian officials and administrators.³ Second, it has frequently

² For a general survey of the role that Persians played in the Islamic world and the significance of their conversion to Islam see R. Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," *Legacy of Persia*, pp. 60–88.

³ See below, pp. 8, 54ff. See also von Kremer, *Streifzüge*, pp. 27ff.; W. Barthold (V. V. Bartold), *Mussulman Culture*, pp. 70, 73ff.; H. A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, pp. 10, 12, 20, 45, 59–60, 63–65, 72, 241; A. Amin, *Fajr al-Islām*, pp. 98–124; A. Amin, *Ḍuḥā' al-Islām*, 1, pp. 164–228; G. E. von Grunebaum, "The

¹ On the rapid and spectacular growth of Islamic civilization see F. Rosenthal, *Historiography*, p. 28. For the continuation of ancient Middle Eastern patterns and paradigms of civilization in Islam see I. Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, pp. xixf.

been declared that conquering Islam was challenged by the more sophisticated outlooks and advanced methods of the native elites; that, in order to meet this challenge and maintain its doctrinal autonomy Islam had to borrow from their rich traditions, and that in doing so, the Muslims relied on the *mawālī*, the non-Arab converts and their descendants, who took the lead in the intellectual life of Islam. A third aspect of this traditional view is the notion of the profound social and political consequences of the gradual Islamization of vast Iranian territories (including much of Transoxania). The incorporation of their large populations into the Muslim community transformed the cultural complexion of Islamic society. Certainly, the fall in 750 CE of the Umayyads, who represented the hegemony of the Arab tribal aristocracy, was mainly the result of dissatisfaction among eastern Muslims, both Arab and non-Arab. Particularly dissatisfied were Iranian populations, whether living in Iraq, Khurasan, or central Asia, and also some of the Arab tribes who had settled in Khurasan and were disaffected over the loss of their privileges as fighting men. The exhaustion of the Syrian forces that served as the backbone of Umayyad power naturally did not help the Umayyad cause. The transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad soon after the fall of the Umayyads represented a shift of the center of gravity of the Islamic empire toward the eastern caliphal lands, which were populated chiefly by Persians. Furthermore, it was a matter of consensus that it was under the Abbasid caliphs that the Persians achieved ascendancy in government and in cultural life. In the words of Bernard Lewis,

With the transfer of the center of the Empire to the East, the destruction of the Arab aristocratic monopoly of high office, and the firm establishment in power of the Barmakids, Persian influences became stronger and stronger. Sasanid Persian models were followed in the court and the government, and Persians began to play an increasingly important part in both political and cultural life. This process of Persianisation continued during the reigns of al-Mahdī and al-Hādī.⁴

In the early Abbasid period the great majority of viziers, secretaries, and fiscal officers, as well as of leading scholars and men of letters, were, it has been often remarked, of Persian stock. The Golden Age of Islam, as the early Abbasid period has been labeled, was dis-

Sources of Islamic Civilization," pp. 21, 31, 43, 45; M. G. S. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, I, p. 280; B. Spuler, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit*, especially pp. 288–93; D. Sourdel, *Le Vizirat 'abbaside*, I, pp. 127ff., 193; B. Spuler, "Central Asia," pp. 145–46; J. Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, pp. 91–93.

⁴ *EF*, I, p. 17b. Cf. I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, pp. 108ff.

tinguished by intellectual advances, literary innovations, and cultural exuberance attributable, in no small measure, to the vital participation of Persian men of letters, philosophers, theologians, grammarians, mathematicians, musicians, astronomers, geographers, and physicians.⁵

This traditional outline will no doubt occasion a number of reservations. It does not give sufficient weight to the importance of the Islamic faith and the Arabic language, both gifts of Arabia, nor does it do justice to the political and theocratic leadership of the Arabs. Furthermore, it is only fair to mention that, despite the splendid achievements of men of Persian descent, they are said to have been responsible as well for a good deal of loose living, moral laxity, and indulgence in *la dolce vita* (mirrored so graphically in the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*).⁶ And in their boastful expressions of racial pride, they matched a bad habit of some Arab braggarts with one of their own.⁷ The Shu'ūbī movement (or rather, rhetoric) of the eighth and ninth centuries, which sought to prove the superiority of non-Arabs over Arabs, was, as far as we know, nowhere stronger than in Persia.⁸ And if it is true that the Abbasids emulated the Sassanian monarchy in fusing together political and religious authority in the person of the caliph, they inherited as well, as Goldziher notes,⁹ their spirit of dogmatism and intolerance from the Sassanians, a spirit that manifested itself in, among other things, the ruthless persecution of heretics and the *zindīqs* (mostly Manichaeans) under al-Mahdī

⁵ On the share of Persians in various branches of learning and also in Islamic administration, see E. G. Browne, *Literary History*, I, p. 204.

⁶ On Persian mores serving as models for elaborate fun and amusement and pleasure-seeking excesses, see A. Amin, *Duha' l-Islam*, I, p. 101ff., particularly pp. 111–12, and p. 182, and the references cited there. See also J. W. Fück, *EF*, III, p. 996, on the involvement of Ibrāhīm Mawṣilī (742–804), the famous musician, in caliphal bouts of revelry. Cf. C. E. Bosworth, "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," p. 493: "The vocabulary of urban lowlife – crime, begging, sexual deviation, stemming in large measure from the conurbation of Baghdad – is particularly rich in Persian words."

⁷ See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, the chapter on 'Arab and 'Ajam, especially pp. 134–35. Cf. Jāhīz's strictures, in an anti-Shu'ūbī mood, against the secretaries, generally of Persian extraction, "who swagger round and exalt the wisdom of the Sasanid emperors and Buzurgmīhr, and the *adab* of Ibn al-Muqaffa" over that of the Prophet and the caliphs, and even over that of the Qur'ān," to quote Bosworth's paraphrase, "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," p. 496, n. 6. See Jāhīz, *Kitāb dhamm al-kuttāb*, pp. 191–94, and below, p. 70 for a fuller citation.

⁸ See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, the chapter on the Shu'ūbiyya, pp. 147ff., and Gibb, "The Social Significance of the Shu'ūbiyya," pp. 62ff.

⁹ "Islamisme et parsisme," p. 8. The very adoption of the term *zindīq* for unbelievers, particularly dualists professing Islam, points to Persian inspiration (<Mid. Pers. *zandīk*, "heretic"; see H. H. Schaeder, *Iranische Beiträge*, pp. 274–91, for a discussion of the term).

(775–85) and the coercive imposition of Mu'tazilite doctrines under al-Ma'mūn (813–33), and suppression by the Abbasids of threatening divergent views in general.

Nevertheless, a number of eminent Islamic scholars in all periods have subscribed to this outline. Ibn Khaldūn, the celebrated fourteenth-century Arab historian and social scientist, included in the last chapter of the introduction (*al-Muqaddima*) to his *History* a section entitled, in Franz Rosenthal's translation, "Most of the Scholars in Islam have been Non-Arabs (Persians)." Under this heading Ibn Khaldūn states:

It is a remarkable fact that, with few exceptions, most Muslim scholars both in the religious and in the intellectual sciences have been non-Arabs. When a scholar is of Arab origin, he is non-Arab in language and upbringing and has non-Arab teachers. This is so in spite of the fact that Islam is an Arabic religion, and its founder was an Arab.¹⁰

Ibn Khaldūn explained this state of affairs on the grounds that crafts, sciences, and professions are cultivated only by sedentary peoples and that the '*ajam*' were most versed in those things, because sedentary culture had been firmly rooted among them from the time of the Persian Empire."¹¹ Among the examples he cites is the fact that

the founders of grammar were Sibawayh and, after him, al-Fārisī and az-Zajjāj. All of them were of non-Arab (Persian) descent. Only the non-Arabs (Persians) engaged in the task of preserving knowledge and writing systematic scholarly works. Thus, the truth of the following statement by the Prophet becomes apparent: "If scholarship hung suspended from the highest part of heaven, the Persians would (reach it and) take it."¹²

¹⁰ *Al-Muqaddima*, Cairo ed., p. 543; tr. F. Rosenthal, III, p. 311. In his translation Rosenthal explains the term "non-Arabs": "In Arabic linguistic usage, the non-Arabs designated by the term '*ajam*' were primarily Persians. From the title of Ibn Khaldūn's *History* one may perhaps conclude that in his mind, '*ajam*' were mainly eastern non-Arabs," p. 311, n. 1206. In the cited section, however, it is clear from what follows that by '*ajam*' Ibn Khaldūn meant the Iranians of the former Sassanian empire; in practice '*ajam*' came to be synonymous with *furs* (Persian).

¹¹ Tr. Rosenthal, III, p. 313.

¹² *Ibid.* The parentheses are Rosenthal's. On this *ḥadīth* see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, p. 112. E. G. Browne's comment on the share of the Persians in the development of Islamic sciences during the first two or three hundred years immediately following the Arab conquest reads almost as a paraphrase of Ibn Khaldūn: "Politically, it is true, Persia ceased for a while to enjoy a separate national existence, being merged in that great Muhammadan Empire which stretched from Gibraltar to the Jaxartes, but in the intellectual domain she soon began to assert the supremacy to which the ability and subtlety of her people entitled her. Take from what is generally called Arabian science, from exegesis, tradition, theology, philosophy, medicine, lexicography, history, biography, even Arabic grammar, the work contributed by Persians, and the best part is gone. Even the forms of state organization were largely adapted

In modern times this evaluation has been repeated by, among others, the distinguished Egyptian cultural historian and man of letters Aḥmad Amīn, who, together with Tāhā Ḥusayn and 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Abbādī, developed a plan for a comprehensive history of Islamic civilization. Amīn devoted a chapter in the first volume of his *Ḍuḥā'l-Islām* (*The Midmorning of Islam*) to the infusion of Persian culture during the early Abbasid period. After mentioning the many translators who served as major transmitters of Persian traditions to Islam, he writes:

But there is another fact no less important [than translation direct from Persian into Arabic], and that is that there were a number of people who mastered both Persian and Arabic. They devoted themselves to the reading of Persian writings, thereby becoming cultivated and refined in their minds and their thoughts. Then they would produce works of literature, poetry, and scholarship. What they produced was not an exact translation of the Persian speech, but derived from it and was born of it; in the same way that today French or English or German culture is cultivated, and then a new literature is produced in Arabic, which is not called European literature but has resulted from it and has its impress and follows its footsteps. (I, p. 179)

Amīn has also expounded on the areas in which Persian domination was clearly visible: narrative and wisdom literature, epistolary style, scholarship in religious and other disciplines, social customs, broad patronage of learning and free debate, and entertainment and music.¹³ His comments on the mixture of Arabic and Persian cultures during this period are worth quoting further:

Many Persians thus mastered Persian and Arabic and cultivated the two cultures . . . We also see a number of Arabs who learned Persian, and found in it nourishment that they could not find in Arabic. Therefore they devoted themselves to books in Persian and kept studying and focusing their attention on them, and then produced a literature in Arabic that combined Persian content with Arabic eloquence . . . These Persians who were Arabicized and the Arabs who had a share of Persian culture filled the world in this Abbasid era with learning and wisdom (*ḥikma*) and poetry and prose in which the

from Persian models." *Literary History*, I, p. 204. Cf. *Kitāb al-tāj* attributed to Jāḥiẓ, p. 23, where the debt of Arabs to Persians in government and social institutions is acknowledged. Cf. G. Wiet, "L'Empire néo-sassanide des Abbassides," pp. 69f.: "Nearly all the scholars of this period – the eighth century – were Persians: the first masters of the systemization of Arabic grammar, the specialists who selected and critically sifted the traditions of the Prophet, the great savants who founded the principles of jurisprudence, those who distinguished themselves in theology as well as the commentators of the Koranic texts. Thus, the Persian genius had utilized to its advantage the new religious movement of Islam by imparting to it an intellectual life, a discipline, and a systematic order."

¹³ Cf. A. von Kremer, *Kulturgeschichte der Stämme*, pp. 27ff.

Persian element was clearly evident . . . One of the good fortunes of Arabic at this period was that it had prevailed over Persian and conquered it. The productions of the Persian mind were superior, but they appeared in Arabic and not in Persian. Their poets, such as Bashshār, their men of letters such as Ibn Muqaffa', and their authors, such as Ibn Qutaiba, Tabarī, and so forth wrote in Arabic.¹⁴

Amīn's last remark echoes in some measure a comment by R. A. Nicholson in *A Literary History of the Arabs* on the effects of the Persian presence on literary style under the Abbasids:

It is not until after the enthronement of the Abbasids, when Persians filled the chief offices at court and when a goodly number of poets and eminent men of learning had Persian blood in their veins, that an unmistakably new note makes itself heard. The earliest Arabic-writing poets of Iranian descent, like Bashshār b. Burd and Abū Nuwās, are without a trace of it [i.e., the high-flown, ornate style seen in al-Mutanabbī's poetry]. What the Persians brought into Arabian poetry was a lively and graceful fancy, elegance of diction, depth and tenderness of feeling, and a rich store of ideas. (p. 290)¹⁵

Discussing Abbasid civilization in his succinct and perceptive *Musulman Culture*, the Russian orientalist W. Barthold similarly observes:

Side by side with the older masters of form there appeared poets with ideas, though, according to the Mussulmans, "eloquence" remained for all times the principal characteristic of Arab literature, and "ideas" the distinctive trait of the Persian. (p. 50)

Persian history was the only history, beside biblical and their own histories, which the Arabs knew well and extensively, and for which they showed admiration. For example, Tabarī writes:

After the Persians no nation except for them has a continuous, unbroken history. This is because the Persian kings continued in unbroken succession from the days of Jayumart until they vanished with the coming of the best nation, the nation of our prophet Muhammad . . . As for the rest of the nations, except for the Persians, it is impossible to attain knowledge of their

¹⁴ *Duḥā'l-Islām*, I, p. 179–81. Cf. R. P. A. Dozy, *Histoire de l'islamisme*, p. 156: "But the most important conversion of all was that of the Persians; it was they and not the Arabs who lent solidity (*fermeté*) and strength to Islam." Cf. further Barthold, *Musulman Culture*, p. 70, who reflected the same view: "We know that men of Persian origin were the chief representatives of Mussulman statesmanship and culture even at the period when the sole literary language of the Islamic world was Arabic."

¹⁵ For the impact of Arabic literature on the emerging New Persian literature, particularly poetry, see F. Gabrieli, "Literary Tendencies," pp. 97f., and other studies mentioned there.

history since they did not have continuous rule in ancient or modern times, and even when they did we cannot determine the sequence of events in their history, or the sequence of their rulers.¹⁶

Goldziher considered the impetus provided by the Persians essential, not only for the development of Islamic civilization, but also for Arab historiography:

It is the immediate and continuing contact with Sassanian civilization that gave the Arabs, confined (*réduit*) as they were to their mere poetry, the first impetus that should allow a more profound intellectual life to develop. I persist, for instance, in the thesis that I have formulated earlier and is accepted by Brockelmann in his *History of Arabic Literature (Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, I, 314) that Arab historiography has its roots in the royal Annals of the Persians, and that there would have been no Arab historiography without the impetus that the Arab men of letters received from Persia first, and which led them to research and preserve the historical memories of their nation.¹⁷

Even some Muslim historians considered Islamic history an extension of Persian history, as Tarīf Khalidī points out in a chapter on Muslim scholars' conception of ancient nations:

Of all ancient histories, Persian history was perhaps the most familiar to Muslim historians of the ninth and tenth centuries. These historians were struck by the long and rich Persian heritage and some even regarded Muslim history as an extension of Persian history and the Muslim empire as a successor to the Persian . . . The ancient Persian dynasties had occupied, according to Mas'ūdī, the most temperate of the seven geographical zones into which the earth is divided. They had therefore been recognized by the other ancient nations as preeminent in glory and power. The first Persian dynasty institutionalized the monarchic principle and perfected the art of government. It is primarily in this sphere that the Persians excelled. This was both theoretical and practical excellence, for their preeminence in government stemmed from the greatness of their empire as well as from the political wisdom which sustained that greatness.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tabarī, I/1, p. 353; *History*, II, tr. W. Brinner, p. 133. On Persian history (unlike the Arab *ayyām*) entering the Arab corpus of *adab* and combining with the history of the biblical prophets to form the pre-Islamic history of the Muslims, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, I, pp. 454–55. ¹⁷ "Islamisme et parsisme," p. 4.

¹⁸ *Historiography*, pp. 90–91. Cf. Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 66–67. The works of earlier Islamic historians and *adab* writers abound in quotations of the wisdom of Sassanian rulers and sages. For further references, see Miskawayh, *al-Hikma al-khālida*; M. Muḥammadi, "Āyin-nāma wa'l-maqāti' al-bāqiya minhā fi'l-masādir al-'arabiyya," in *al-Dirāsāt al-'adabiyya*, I, pp. 2–3; M. Muḥammadi, *al-Tarjama wa'l-naql 'an al-fārisiyya*, I, *passim*; S. Shaked, "Andarz in Pre-Islamic Persia," pp. 15–16.

The pivotal role that the Persians played during the early Abbasid era in the development of Islamic culture has been pointed out by many historians of Islam. Of the older generation of Western scholars who have addressed the question, Reinhart Dozy, the noted Dutch Arabist, is representative:

The ascendancy of the Persians, that is to say, of the conquered over the victors, had already for a long while been in the course of preparation; it became complete when the Abbasids, who owed their elevation to the Persians, ascended the throne. These princes made it a rule to put their trust only in Persians, especially those of Khurasan. The most distinguished personages at court were consequently Persians.¹⁹

Similar judgments were expressed by Gerlof van Vloten, Alfred von Kremer, Ignaz Goldziher, Vladimir Barthold, Carl Brockelmann, and others.²⁰ Goldziher, for instance, brings into focus the significance of the advent of the Abbasids for the Persian elements in Islam:

The national Arab character of the Islamic state declined with the beginning of the Abbasid rule and foreign elements came to the fore. The Persian *mawālī*, not to name the other elements, transferred their own religious traditions from their original environment into the new circles; they had only to transfer their inherited religious sense into Islamic idiom. They were rather more fitted for this than were the original Arab elements who inwardly rejected Islam and who had not been prepared by their past to create a higher social and moral conception of life from its seeds.²¹

At a deeper level, the Abbasid caliphs, by joining religious authority to secular function and zealously proclaiming themselves protectors of the faith and upholders of orthodoxy, were, in fact, conforming,

¹⁹ *Histoire de l'islamisme*, pp. 228–29 (the passage tr. by E. B. Browne, in *Literary History*, I, p. 204); cf. Tabarī, III/1, p. 320, tr. H. Kennedy: *History*, XXIX, p. 4, concerning the vizier Khālid b. Barmak's influence and the caliph al-Manṣūr's reference to his partiality for the Persians. Cf. B. Spuler, "Iran: The Persistent Heritage," pp. 169ff.

²⁰ See E. G. Browne's chapter on the Golden Age of Islam, *Literary History*, I, pp. 251ff. and the previous chapter, where he refers to the views of these authors with generous quotations from most of them; cf. William Muir: "With the rise of Persian influence . . . there opened an era of culture, toleration, and scientific research. The practice of oral tradition was also giving place to recorded statement and historical narrative – a change hastened by the scholarly tendencies introduced from the East." *The Caliphate*, p. 432.

²¹ *Muslim Studies*, II, pp. 59–60. Cf. Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, par. 3446, who quotes Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Misrī as saying about the caliph al-Manṣūr: "He was the first caliph who employed his *mawālī* and his pages (*ghilmānahu*) to carry out the public functions and used them in his important affairs, and gave them the lead over the Arabs. And the caliphs, who came after him from his descendants followed suit; as a result the leadership of the Arabs disappeared and their ranks vanished." Cf. C. Cahen, "Points de vue," p. 335.

as noted earlier, to the Sassanian concept of rulers who combined secular sovereignty with guardianship of the faith.²² Legitimizing power through descent from 'Abbās, an uncle of the Prophet; "secluding themselves from the common gaze, employing as well curtains and other paraphernalia, numerous guards and chamberlains,²³ to impede that access to their chiefs which Arabs claimed as a right"; wearing luxurious Persian attire; and practicing Naurūz (Persian New Year feast) customs and ceremonies show the extent to which Arab rule was permeated with the Persian spirit and the culture of kingship.²⁴

The institution of the *qādī*, a man learned in religious sciences and presiding over the courts of law, even in civil cases, appears to be, according to Reuben Levy, a calque on the Zoroastrian *mōbad*.²⁵ The *barīd* system of postal service for communicating rapidly, gathering intelligence, and conveying the caliph's commands to provincial agents is another Sassanian practice adopted by the Abbasid administration in both Iraq and Persia.²⁶

The most important administrative institution adopted from Sassanian Persia in the Abbasid state, however, was the *dīwān*, the system of governmental departments. Although the system began under the Umayyads or earlier, it was developed and expanded under al-Manṣūr and reached its peak under the Barmacids during the caliphate of al-Rashīd.²⁷

However, the emphasis placed on the strong presence of Persian elements in the Abbasid period and their contribution to the development of Abbasid polity does not mean that such contributions were absent or minimal under the Umayyads or Orthodox Caliphs. In fact, the Persian presence among the Arabs goes back to pre-Islamic times.

II Persian presence among the Arabs prior to Islam

Although Perso-Arab relations prior to Islam may appear unrelated to our topic, it is in fact important to bear them in mind for the

²² Cf. Wiet, "L'Empire néo-sassanide des Abbassides," p. 69.

²³ R. Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," p. 67. On the other hand, it may be a genuine Islamic institution helped by the Persian tradition.

²⁴ Although the immediate model for the Abbasid caliphs was most probably Sassanian theocratic monarchy, we should not lose sight of the fact that the practice had long roots in the ancient Near East, except in the Arabian peninsula, as Bosworth notes, "Abbasid Caliphate," p. 90.

²⁵ In "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 67–68.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69; for details of *barīd* operation see Levy, *Social Structure*, pp. 299ff.

²⁷ See Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 63–64, 69 and Bosworth, "Abbasid Caliphate," *Elr*, I, p. 91a.

appreciation of the influences that Persia exerted in pre-Islamic Arabia and, as a result, on the Muslim world. For Islamic society inherited much of the pre-Islamic lore and customs, religious practices, literary norms, and, above all, the Arabic tongue, the chief repository of Arab traditions. These traditions carried with them also influences – whether Aramaic, Persian, Hellenistic, Ethiopian, or otherwise – that had been received by Arabs before the conquest.

Ibn Qutaiba reports the existence of Zoroastrianism (*majūsiyya*) among the tribes of Tamīm and of Manichaeism (*zandaqa*) among the Quraysh.²⁸ And ‘Amr ibn ‘Adī, the first king of the Lakhmids of Hīra, was a protector of the Manichaeans after Mani’s crucifixion.²⁹ And according to a Tradition cited by Ibn Sa‘īd³⁰ there were Mazdakites in Mecca, and they were recognized as such during the time of the Prophet. The Koran and the poetry of the *jāhiliyya* (by which the Muslims refer to the “dark ages” of Arabia before Islam; literally “ignorance”) contains a number of words borrowed from Persian; and it is claimed that some of the notions of Islamic faith were ultimately derived from Persian religions (see below). An excursus on Perso-Arab relations in pre-Islamic times and their effects on the Muslim world, therefore, will hardly be irrelevant.

Under the Achaemenids

Persian relations with the Arabs may be traced at least to Achaemenian times. Cyrus the Great reportedly subdued and incorporated Arabs into his army and founded an Arabian satrapy³¹ after he captured Babylon in 539 BCE.³² When Cambyses was on his way to conquer Egypt, he was helped by a king of the Arabs in northern

²⁸ *Ma‘ārif*, p. 621. For the *zindīqs* (i.e., Manichaeans) betaking themselves from al-Hīra to Mecca see Ibn Rusta, *A‘lāq*, p. 217. For the important role that Arabs played in the propagation of Manichaeism in Egypt, a province of the Roman empire, see W. Seston, *Diocletien et la tétarchie*, I, pp. 148ff., particularly pp. 152, 166; cf. H. Schaeder, *Gnomon*, 9 (1934), p. 341, *apud* Seston, p. 152, n. 3; and I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs*, p. 112, n. 3. For possible influence of the Manichaean doctrine of revelation on Muḥammad and the *ḥanīfs* see T. Andrae, *Mohammed*, pp. 105, 110, 112.

²⁹ See W. Seston, “Le Roi Sassanide Narsès, les arabes, et le manichéisme,” in *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud* (Paris, 1939), pp. 227–34, *apud* I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 33–34. There were still Manichaeans in Syria among the Arabs in the eighth century, whose execution and the destruction of whose books were ordered by the caliph al-Mahdī in the course of his journey to Syria in AH 163/780 CE; see Ṭabarī, III/I, p. 499.

³⁰ See below, p. 28.

³¹ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* I.i.4; VII.iv.16; VII.v.14. Cf. Darius’ satrapy *Arabāya*, Behistūn inscription, col. I, l. 15 (for other occurrences see Kent, *Old Persian*, index).

³² According to Xenophon, he appointed Megabyzus its satrap: *Cyropaedia* VIII.vi.7.

Arabia,³³ and Xerxes hired camel-mounted Arabs to procure water for his army in the desert.³⁴ According to Herodotus III.97, the Arabs of the Achaemenid empire paid each year a thousand talents of frankincense to Darius’ treasury as tribute (this is mentioned also by Pliny the Elder, XII.80, following Herodotus). Dio Chrysostom I.72.9 mentions that Arabs served in the army of Darius and Xerxes. (Lecoq, *Les Inscriptions*, p. 138, surmises that they were probably the Arabs living in the northern Syrian desert.).

Under the Arsacids

After the Arsacids (247 BCE–224 CE) gained control of Mesopotamia from the Seleucids in 140 BCE, a number of vassal principalities, cities, and city states on the eastern borders of the Parthian empire and the desert fringes of the Fertile Crescent began to prosper. Serving as defensive strongholds of the Parthian empire or as buffers between Rome and Persia, these entities often had mixed populations of Aramaeans, Arabs,³⁵ and others. Most of the frontier cities were also trade centers and served as commercial links between Persia and Rome.³⁶ While sharing some of the Hellenistic traditions inherited from the Seleucid era,³⁷ they came increasingly under the influence of the Parthians, with whom their political sympathy generally lay.³⁸ The Parthian names of some of their rulers (see below), their art, costumes, headgear, decorations, and architectural features, uncovered in archaeological excavations, attest to the progressive Iranian cultural impact on Palmyra, even though it was a vassal kingdom of Rome. In his pioneering and richly documented essay “Dura and Problems of Parthian Art,”³⁹ M. I. Rostovtzeff shows the close cultural affinity of Dura and Palmyra and the “Oriental” character of their art.⁴⁰ He

³³ Herodotus III.5, 9. ³⁴ Herodotus VII.86–87; cf. Pauly–Wissowa, I/1, col. 346.

³⁵ For penetration of the Arabs into Mesopotamia and their mode of life there see M. G. Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 214ff.; cf. I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs*, pp. 7ff. Shahid in his *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 119ff., argues that in addition the Ghassanids passed through Hīra, a sphere of Persian influence, and dwelt there before settling in Syria.

³⁶ See M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, pp. 19f., and J. B. Segal, *Edessa*, pp. 29–30, on trade between Palmyra in Syria on the Roman side and Edessa, Nisibis, and Adiabene. ³⁷ See Segal, *Edessa*, pp. 11, 19, 30.

³⁸ It should be remembered, however, that all the Parthian domains had earlier been part of the Achaemenian empire and their local art and culture had already been exposed to Iranian influence for more than two centuries before Alexander’s conquest. ³⁹ “Dura,” pp. 157–304.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 252–53. He rejects Franz Cumont’s characterization of their art as Graeco-Syrian in favor of an Iranian-inspired art; see pp. 238, 240ff., 256, 258f., 260f., 266f. Cf. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, pp. 214ff. On Dura’s art and the Parthian influences on it see *ibid.*, in particular pp. 167ff., 182, 193ff., 271, 293ff. See also R. Ghirshman,

concludes that Parthian art, which in its essentials continues the Achaemenian legacy, and is independent of Greek art, should be considered the main model and source of inspiration for Mesopotamian and Palmyrene art and architecture.⁴¹ The Parthians, he points out, were the sovereigns of Mesopotamia for more than two hundred years,⁴² a period that afforded great prosperity to the region. They began in a Hellenistic environment, where the Graeco-Bactrian dynasty had ruled and had practiced Greek art; therefore, their coins and their art exhibit Greek features. However, they considered themselves successors to the Achaemenids more than anything else⁴³ and gradually shed many of their Hellenistic traits.⁴⁴ Their confidence grew and their influence intensified after their resounding victory over the Romans at the battle of Carrhae (Ḥarrān) in 53 BCE, in which Crassus, the Roman consul, lost his life and the Roman army was humiliated.⁴⁵ Their defeat of Antony and the concessions made by Augustus to them further increased their prestige and reinforced their impact.⁴⁶ Their influence was widespread. It could be seen not only in Palmyrene art outside the political borders of the Arsacids, but also further north in the art of Anatolia, and even as far away as India and China.⁴⁷ Their tolerant rule and the relative peace that they brought to Mesopotamia made the cities on their western borders, whether commercial centers or defensive forts, thrive and prosper. Among these cities were Dura-Europas, Edessa, Nisibis, Adiabene,

Parthians and Sassanians, chaps. I and IV, especially pp. 35–37, 49–51; M. A. R. Colledge, *Parthians*, pp. 115ff.; and D. Schlumberger, "Parthian Art," pp. 1027–54; G. Widengren, *Kulturbegegnung*, p. 5ff., 12–24.

⁴¹ "Dura," pp. 238ff., 266f., 293ff.; cf. Ghirshman, *Parthians and Sassanians*, p. 12, who supports Rostovtzeff's thesis. Henri Seyrig, however, emphasizes the Greek element in Graeco-Iranian art more than Rostovtzeff does; see his "Armes et costumes iraniennes de Palmyre," in *Syria*, 29, 1940, pp. 177–328. Cf. Schlumberger's equal emphasis on the Greek element, applicable mainly to architecture. In a balanced appraisal he writes: "This great political change [i.e., the Parthian domination] could not fail to react on art, which necessarily had to adapt itself to the tastes and needs of the new masters for whom alone by now it was meant. Thus was born a truly Graeco-Iranian art, linking its predominantly Greek elements and, if we are right, Achaemenian survivals with Neo-Iranian [i.e., Parthian] elements now appearing, in both iconography and style," "Parthian Art," p. 1048. Cf. Ghirshman, *Parthians and Sassanians*, p. 87.

⁴² "Dura," p. 202. Actually 265 years; see P. Leriche, "Dura," in *Elr*, VII, pp. 589ff. Rostovtzeff, "Dura," pp. 295f.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, pp. 162, 165, 174; cf. p. 197 on the Greek inhabitants of the region being assimilated to the oriental population.

⁴⁴ See N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, p. 78, n. 36, for classical sources, and D. Bivar, "The Political History of Parthia under the Arsacids," pp. 48ff., 66.

⁴⁵ Rostovtzeff, "Dura," pp. 189–90.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 270f.; Schlumberger, "Parthian Art," pp. 1030, 1053; Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, p. 96ff.

Hatra, and Charax Spasinou.⁴⁸ Brief accounts of these centers may be noted.

Dura. Dura (or Doura), originally a Babylonian town on the Middle Euphrates, was refounded as a military colony by Nicanor, a general of Seleucus I Nicator, in 303 BCE⁴⁹ and given the alternative name of Europos in commemoration of the native city in Macedonia of the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Its history is typical of the Parthian border cities. It fell to the Parthians about 113 BCE in the course of their dispossessing the Seleucids of Mesopotamia.⁵⁰ Like Palmyra, whose prosperity coincided with the rise of the Parthians in Mesopotamia,⁵¹ Dura thrived as a Parthian defensive and commercial center on one of the silk routes to Syria.⁵² It was briefly occupied from 115 to 117 by the Romans during Trajan's offensive, but soon returned to Parthian possession and remained so until 165, when it was taken by Avidius Cassius and became part of the Roman defense system of the eastern frontiers. It could not, however, withstand the Sassanian Shapur I's attack in 256 in the course of his campaign against the eastern Roman provinces.⁵³ He besieged it, broke its resistance, and deported its population, thus putting an end to its existence. It never rose again.

Excavations were carried out in Dura by French and American teams in 1920–22 and 1930–37 respectively, and from 1986 by the Franco-Syrian Mission. A considerable number of architectural remains, mural paintings, sculptures, and decorations have been uncovered. From the testimony of Semitic, Greek, Jewish, and Christian temples as well as the parchments, papyri, inscriptions, and

⁴⁸ In most other cities of Mesopotamia such as Assur and Ctesiphon the population was mixed, and Persians came into contact with Aramaic and Arab elements in them.

⁴⁹ According to P. Leriche, director with A. Mahmoud of the Franco-Syrian excavations of Dura since 1987, in "Dura," pp. 589–93 and D. N. MacKenzie, in *Elr*, VII, pp. 593–94, rather than about 280 BCE as indicated by Rostovtzeff, "Dura," p. 195.

⁵⁰ For literature on Dura, see Watzinger in Pauly-Wissowa, Suppl. VII, cols. 149–69; C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura-Europas*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, and Leriche, "Dura." ⁵¹ Rostovtzeff, "Dura," p. 202.

⁵² Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, p. 205. Leriche, however, discounts the commercial significance of Dura on account of lack of evidence, "Dura," pp. 598–93.

⁵³ For Shapur's account of this campaign see W. B. Henning, "The Great Inscription of Šāpūr I," pp. 823–49; Henning, "Notes on the Great Inscription of Šāpūr I," pp. 40–54; A. Maricq, "Res gestae divi Saporis"; A. Maricq and E. Honigsmann, "Recherches sur les 'Res gestae divi Saporis.'" For a summary of events see R. N. Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sassanians," pp. 124–27.

graffiti,⁵⁴ it is clear that the city had a mixed population of Semites (including Arabs), Greeks, and Macedonians (generally Semitized or Iranized), who seem to have lived peacefully together under the Parthians' liberal rule.⁵⁵ The administration of the city continued its Hellenistic frame, but its art and culture – a synthesis of native, Greek, and Iranian – came increasingly under the Parthian influence and were stimulated by it.

Rostovtzeff attempted to describe, mainly on the basis of finds from Dura, the defining features of Parthian art. The main features he recognized were “frontality,” whereby all figures in painting and sculpture are portrayed full face and in frontal representation, looking the beholder in the eyes; neglect of the body (in contrast to Greek art); simplification; linearity; flatness of forms; spirituality; meager faces and wide languid eyes (helping the effect of spirituality); verism; and the “flying gallop” in depicting animals, particularly horses.⁵⁶ These features affected early Byzantine and Christian art by virtue of their currency in Syria and Anatolia. As Rostovtzeff notes:

Simplification was the leading phenomenon of Parthian art in Mesopotamia, and along with it, spiritualization. Archaic devices like frontality and the flying gallop, which probably were taken over from the ancient Syro-Hittite art by the early Iranians – which strongly appealed to the nomadic artistic feeling and were completely foreign to the Greeks and the Semites – became for a while leading features of the artistic compositions of the Near East and never disappeared completely from its artistic horizon. Linearity, one-dimensionality, spirituality, and painstaking ethnographic realism took firm roots in Syria and Mesopotamia and greatly influenced the art of the late Roman and early Byzantine period in these regions. (“Dura,” p. 299)

Thus Parthian art may be said to have had an indirect impact on the Islamic art of Syria and Palestine, which was influenced by Byzantine art under the Umayyads.

⁵⁴ For Parthian and Middle Persian inscriptions and other writings see D. N. Mackenzie, “Dura ii: Inscriptions,” pp. 593–94 (with bibliography); Ph. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes* (with bibliography); R. N. Frye, ed., *The Parthian and Middle Persian Inscriptions of Dura-Europos*; W. B. Henning, “Mitteliranisch,” pp. 41f., 46; B. Geiger, *The Synagogue: The Middle Iranian Texts*, pp. 283–317.

⁵⁵ Rostovtzeff, “Dura,” pp. 200, 203; Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, pp. 197f., 203.

⁵⁶ See “Dura,” pp. 236ff., 256, 258; *Caravan Cities*, p. 215. These features have often been discussed by other historians of Iranian and Near Eastern art; see, e.g., Schlumberger, “Parthian Art,” p. 1050; Ghirshman, *Parthians and Sassanians*, p. 36, and Leriche, “Dura-Europos,” pp. 589–93. There is, however, no solid agreement on the origin of some of these features, except perhaps frontality, but there is agreement that they characterize Parthian art. See A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura-Europos* (1973), who takes into account the excavations and researches subsequent to Rostovtzeff's *Dura-Europos and its Art* (1938).

Edessa. Edessa (local name Orhay, Parth. *ʾwrh'y*, Ar. al-Ruhā', modern Urfa in Turkey), a very ancient settlement, was built in the plain of Ḥarrān, in the loop of the Euphrates on the route from southern Anatolia to northern Mesopotamia. It was practically coterminous on the west and north with the Roman province of Osroene⁵⁷ (from Iranian *Xusrav*).⁵⁸ Refounded as a military stronghold by Seleucus I, it was renamed Edessa, after the Macedonian capital. When the Arsacids extended their power to Mesopotamia, Edessa gained autonomy under their loose sovereignty as a small kingdom allied to the Parthians and began to shed some of its Hellenistic features. It was ruled from 132 BCE to 242 CE by the Arab Abgar dynasty, whose members bore Nabataean, Arab, and Parthian names.⁵⁹ Romans generally regarded the people of Edessa as Arab.⁶⁰ It was in occupying Edessa that Trajan received the title of “Arabicus.”

Christianity came to Edessa in about 150, and the city gradually became the most important bishopric in Mesopotamia. When Nisibis was taken by the Persians in 363, a host of refugees, mostly Christians, sought residence in Edessa. One of them, St. Ephraim (Ephrem), is thought to have founded the famous seminary known as “The School of the Persians,” which supported Nestorius, the eponymous founder of the Nestorian Church.⁶¹ The church and literary language was Syriac. The culture was mixed: Syrian, Iranian, and Roman. The strong Iranian cultural influence is evidenced by the Parthian names of some of its kings (Fradasht, Paqor, Parthamaspat, Fradat),⁶² the titles of the officials (such as *pasgribā*, the title of the highest office holder next to the king [Parth. *pasāgrīv*]; *nūhadrā* [Parth. *naxwādār*, *noxaδār*]),⁶³ and by men's costumes, elaborate headgear, and decorations.

⁵⁷ On Edessa's history see Ed. Meyer in Pauly-Wissowa, V/2, cols. 1933–37; B. Kirsten in *Reallexikon für Antike*, cols. 552–97; the detailed article by E. Honigsmann in *EP*, III, pp. 1062–67, under “Orfa”; J. B. Segal, *Edessa: The Blessed City*; J. B. Segal, “Abgar,” in *Elr*, I, pp. 210–13; S. N. C. Lieu, “Edessa,” in *Elr*, VIII, pp. 174–75.

⁵⁸ Lieu, “Edessa,” in *Elr*, pp. 174–75.

⁵⁹ A list of these kings is given by J. B. Segal, “Abgar,” in *Elr*, I, p. 211a and in E. Honigsmann under “Orfa,” in *EP*, III, p. 1062b.

⁶⁰ Tacitus XII. 12.14; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* V.85.

⁶¹ See Segal, *Edessa*, pp. 87ff.; Lieu, in *Elr*, VIII, p. 174. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, believed that Mary should be called, not “Mother of God,” but “Mother of Christ.” He was banished for heresy. The Persian Church was Nestorian.

⁶² See Segal, “Abgar,” in *Elr*, I, p. 211; Segal, *Edessa*, p. 30, n. 3; W. B. Henning, “The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak,” p. 151; W. B. Henning, “A New Parthian Inscription,” p. 124; A. D. H. Bivar and S. Shaked, “The Inscriptions at Shīmbār,” p. 265. ⁶³ See Segal, “Abgar,” in *Elr*, I, p. 212b.

With Shapur I's conquest, Edessa was drawn into the Persian political sphere, but repeatedly changed hands between Sassanians and their Western rivals, coming increasingly under Roman and then Byzantine influence. In 544, it was besieged by the Persians, but resisted surrender.⁶⁴ In 609, however, it fell to Khusrau II Parwēz, but was recaptured by Heraclius in 628. In 639, it surrendered to the advancing Arab army. For some centuries after Islam Edessa retained a sizable Christian population.

Nisibis. Nisibis (Ar. Naṣībīn), in upper Mesopotamia and now Nusaybin in Turkey, like most frontier cities between Rome and Persia, repeatedly changed hands during the Perso-Roman and Perso-Byzantine wars.⁶⁵ From about the middle of the fourth century, however, it remained almost exclusively in Persian hands. In 489, the Nestorian academy of Edessa, which could no longer tolerate Byzantine persecutions, was transferred, under Sassanian auspices, to Nisibis.⁶⁶ In 639, Nisibis surrendered to Muslim Arabs, as did Amida (Diyārbakr), which had also been a bone of contention between Persia and Byzantium and had suffered greatly as a result.⁶⁷

Adiabene. Adiabene, situated east of the Tigris in the heartland of the former Assyrian empire, came to prominence with the Parthian occupation of Mesopotamia.⁶⁸ The Parthians, as was their wont, exerted their power on their vassals lightly and allowed them to manage their own affairs and follow their own religion.⁶⁹ Izales, the king of Adiabene (36–60 CE), adopted Judaism, as had his father, Monobazus.⁷⁰ Artabanus II took refuge with Izales after being ousted by a rival, and Izales helped him regain his throne. Artabanus, in gratitude, increased Izales's privileges and extended his domain. The tolerance of the Parthians toward other religions, in contrast to

Sassanian rigidity and restrictions, was such that the Jews of Edessa, Nisibis, and Adiabene were among their most vigorous allies and staunchly opposed Trajan's invasion of Mesopotamia,⁷¹ "a cause for which much of their blood was spilt by the legions."⁷² In the Sassanian period (224–651 CE), the loyalty of Adiabene toward the Arsacids, like that of Armenia, along with the growth of Christianity in both, made them suspect. Suspicion was, however, removed after the establishment of the Nestorian Church in Persia in 424.

Hatra. Hatra (Ar. al-Ḥaḍr), a caravan city in northern Iraq, southwest of Mosul, was a chief center of Parthian influence.⁷³ The preponderance of Arabic names among the rulers noted in an Aramaic inscription found in its ruins in 1951⁷⁴ confirmed the Arab character of the city assumed earlier by Hertzfeld.⁷⁵ The Parthian impact in Hatra may be gauged by the Iranian names of some of its rulers. The first ruler who calls himself a king (*Malkā dhī 'Arabh*, "king of the Arabs") has the Parthian name *vlg'š* (Vologases=Valaxš, Balāsh). At least three other rulers have the typical Parthian royal name Sanatruk.⁷⁶ Hatra remained a Parthian feudatory and prospered as a commercial city until the Sassanians did away with the last Arsacid king in 224. For a while the Romans garrisoned it against the Sassanians; as a result Shapur I (240–70) conquered, sacked, and destroyed it in the course of his campaigns against Roman eastern provinces. The fate of Hatra "became famous in Arabic lore as an object lesson in the transience of earthly prosperity."⁷⁷ A legend about the defeat of the king of Hatra, Daizan b. Mu'āwiya, and the surrender of the city is widely recorded by Muslim authors.⁷⁸

⁷¹ See Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'état iranien*, pp. 61–78.

⁷² Sellwood, in *EI* I, p. 458b; cf. Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, I, pp. 76–88.

⁷³ See T. Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 33ff.; Hertzfeld, "Hatra," pp. 655–76; Pauly-Wissowa VII/2, cols. 2516–23; F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, I, pp. 275–78, IV, 246–305; C. E. Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," pp. 593f. On the influence of Parthian art on the art of Hatra see above, pp. 15f., and Colledge, *Parthians*, pp. 157–62, plates 50, 52–56.

⁷⁴ Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 595. ⁷⁵ "Hatra," p. 665.

⁷⁶ See F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, pp. 282–83; A. Maricq, "Hatra de Sanatruk," *Syria*, 32 (1955), p. 283; Henning, "Mitteliranisch," p. 41, n. 1. (<*Sāna-taru-ka, "enemy conquering"); and Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 596.

⁷⁷ Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 596.

⁷⁸ According to the legend, the victory was achieved by Shapur as a result of the treachery of the king's daughter, Nādirā, who became enamored of Shapur and betrayed the city on condition that he marry her. When, after marrying her, he realized how pampered she had been by her father, Shapur (indignant at her ingratitude and fearing a similar betrayal against himself) ordered her killed by tying her hair to the tail of a horse set to a gallop. See Ṭabarī I/2, pp. 827ff., Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, II, 1407–11; Ibn Qutaiba, *Uyūn*, IV, pp. 119–20; Tha'ālibī, *Ghurur*, p. 492; A.

⁶⁴ Procopius, *Persian Wars* II, xxvi, 5–27, 46.

⁶⁵ For a survey of the history of Nisibis in pre-Islamic times and classical and Syriac references see E. Honigsmann in *EP*, III, pp. 558–60; and J. Sturm in Pauly-Wissowa, XVII/1, cols. 714–57.

⁶⁶ See N. Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'état iranien*, pp. 244–51.

⁶⁷ On Amida see Ammianus Marcellinus, 18.9–10, 19.1–9, 20.2.1–5, 11.4ff.; Procopius, *Persian Wars* I.vii, 4, 12ff., ix, 1–4, 20, 23; Adontz, *Armenia*, tr. N. Garsoïan, index; Honigsmann, *Die Ostgrenze*, index; J. Marquart (Markwart), *Erānsāhr*, pp. 118, 172; Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'état iranien*, pp. 61–78; D. Sellwood in *EI*, I, p. 938.

⁶⁸ For classical sources see Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, pp. 165f. and index; Sellwood, in *EI* I, p. 475a; and Pauly-Wissowa, I/1, cols. 1833–35.

⁶⁹ On Parthian loose and lenient suzerainty cf. Segal, *Edessa*, p. 9; Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, I, pp. 16, 31.

⁷⁰ For the Jewish rulers of Adiabene and its Jewish population see Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, I, pp. 61ff. and index.

Charax Spasinou. Charax Spasinou (Ar. Karkh Maysān), originally a Seleucid city⁷⁹ reportedly founded by Alexander, and located in the lower Mesopotamian plain near the head of the Persian Gulf, was refounded after the Parthians gained Mesopotamia.⁸⁰ Its founder, the Arab Hyspaosines, bears an Iranian name,⁸¹ as do several members of his dynasty.⁸² The vassal kingdom of Characene or Mesene (Middle Persian Mēshūn, Arabic of the Islamic period Maysān) remained fairly autonomous under the Arsacids for three centuries, until Ardashīr, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty, made it a Persian province.⁸³

Under the Sassanians

With the advent of the energetic and hard-driving Sassanians (224–651) and their policy of increasing centralization, the relationship of border cities and principalities with Persia changed. Some cities like Hatra and Dura were destroyed, others like Amida and Charax were annexed, and still others declined in importance. But the Persian presence in Mesopotamia and in the Arab world in general was maintained with even stronger emphasis. Ctesiphon continued to serve as the capital and developed into a metropolis consisting of several cities.⁸⁴ Its population was mainly Aramaic, Syrian, and Arab, with the Persians in the minority.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, it served as a showcase for Persian civilization and a source of Persian influence. Its splendid royal palaces (including the impressive Aiwān of Kisrā with its majestic audience hall), the luxuries of the royal household, and

Christensen, "La Princesse sur la feuille de myrte," pp. 241–57; A. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 218, n. 1; Ch. Pellat in *EF*, III, pp. 50f. under "al-Ḥadr." The legend is also attributed to Ardashīr and Shapur II and has many variants. It is also the subject of one of Hans Christian Andersen's tales.

⁷⁹ Pauly–Wissowa, III/2, col. 2122, no. 10; W. W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 53.

⁸⁰ See J. Hansman, "Characene and Charax," *Elr*, V, pp. 363–65; A. R. Bellinger, "Hyspaosines of Charax," pp. 53–67; Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, p. 38; G. Le Rider, "Monnaies de Characène," pp. 230, 251; Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, I, pp. 317–43.

⁸¹ See Bellinger, "Hyspaosines of Charax," p. 54, n. 8, and Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 594, for different proposed etymologies of the name.

⁸² A list of them is given in *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, III/1, p. 315; for references, see *ibid.*, pp. 311ff. See also Humbach and Skjærvø, *Paikuli*, 3/b, pp. 70ff. on Ādurfarnbay, king of Mēšan.

⁸³ Cf. Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'état iranien*, pp. 119–23, who presents a Marxist interpretation of the Sassanian policy in Mesopotamia. See also Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, II, pp. 10–11.

⁸⁴ See E. Honigsmann in Pauly–Wissowa, Suppl. IV, cols. 1102–19, and J. Kröger in *Elr*, VI, pp. 446–80. ⁸⁵ Kröger, in *Elr*, VI, p. 447a.

the pomp of the Persian nobility did not fail to elicit the admiration of the Arab chieftains and tributaries who visited the capital.⁸⁶

New cities were founded or refounded in Iraq or became prominent as a result of Sassanian support. One such city of particular importance was Ḥīra.

Ḥīra. An Arab city and a principality in central Iraq,⁸⁷ Ḥīra rose to fame and prosperity as a caravan city and commercial center during Sassanian times, when Dura, Hatra, and Palmyra fell in rapid succession. Connecting Iraq and Persia with Roman Syria, Ḥīra was the meeting place of Persian, Arab, and Byzantine cultures; the latter was represented chiefly by Nestorian Christianity, which the majority of the town's people (called *ʿibād*, "devotees" in the sources) had gradually adopted and which the Sassanians supported after 424, when the Nestorian Church gained recognition by Bahrām V as the Persian Church (even though Lakhmid kings remained pagan almost to the end).⁸⁸ Ḥīra had no rival for the more than three centuries prior to the advent of Islam among the Arab cities.

Many Arab poets, among them A'shā, Nābigha, Ṭarafa, Labīd, and Ḥassān ibn Thābit, repaired to the Lakhmid court in search of patrons and praised the kings of Ḥīra.⁸⁹ "The Christian poet 'Adī b. Zeid," writes Arthur Jeffery, "lived long at this court, as did the almost Christian al-A'shā, and their poems are full of Persian words."⁹⁰ The fame of the Lakhmid kings, who received their crowns from the Sassanian monarchs,⁹¹ spread far and wide and is reflected in Arabic chronicles, anthologies, and works of *adab*.⁹² They guarded Persia's eastern frontiers against the nomadic pressure from inside the Arabian peninsula, provided auxiliary troops in the wars against Byzantium and their Ghassanid clients, kept the spice route safe, watched over Persian mercantile interests, and helped maintain the Persian sphere of influence in Arabia, particularly in the Arabian

⁸⁶ Cf. Goldziher, "Islamisme et parsisme," p. 22. Buḥturī (d. 897) has an entire *qaṣida* devoted to the description of the Aiwān (see below, p. 45).

⁸⁷ On Ḥīra's geographical extent and its administration from the sixth century onward see Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 151–55.

⁸⁸ Only the last of the Lakhmids, Nu'mān, adopted Christianity openly; see I. Shahīd, "Lakhmids," in *EF*, V, p. 643a. ⁸⁹ Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 609.

⁹⁰ *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, p. 14.

⁹¹ Hormizd IV is reported to have given Nu'mān III a crown (*tāj*) worth 60,000 dirhams; see Ṭabarī I/2, p. 1018; G. Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, p. 128.

⁹² See Ṭabarī I/2, pp. 744–71, 821–22, 850–63, 888–99, 981, 1016–32, 1038–39; Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 23–24, 46, 78–85, 147–50, 168, 172, 221, 312–49; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, I, 1036–75; Hamza Isfahānī, *Ta'rikh*, pp. 94–121; Dinawarī, *al-Akhbār al-tiwal*, pp. 51, 54–55; Ibn al-Athīr (index).

littoral of the Persian Gulf.⁹³ As vassals of the Sassanian kings (*ummāl min qibal al-furs*),⁹⁴ they derived their power essentially from the backing of the Persian army and a contingent of Persian soldiers stationed in Hīra.⁹⁵ Through Lakhmid mediation, the Sassanians exercised commercial and political control sometimes as far away as Mecca and Yathrib in the Hijāz.⁹⁶ As part of its struggle with Byzantium, Persia "attempted to exert its influence in Mecca and Yathrib (the later Medina) via the recognized Hīra-Mecca commercial and cultural highway, thereby countering the influence of the Ghassānids in the Hijāz."⁹⁷

Intimate relations with Persia⁹⁸ made Hīra a center from which

⁹³ See Shahid, *EP*, V, p. 634a. ⁹⁴ Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, p. 128.

⁹⁵ Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 599; Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, pp. 135f.

⁹⁶ According to a report in Tabarī I/2, p. 958, Khusrāu I appointed Mundhir III ibn Mā' al-Samā' over a vast area that included Bahrain, 'Umān, and the Yamāma, and extended as far west as Tā'if and the rest of the Hijāz. See Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, p. 238; Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, pp. 75-83; Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der Alten Welt*, V/1, pp. 361-62; Sidney Smith, "Events in Arabia," p. 442. Another report in Tabarī, I/2, p. 853, states that Nu'mān b. Imru'l-Qays, a contemporary of Yazdgird I (r. 399-421), raided the Ghassanid territory in 410 with Persian military assistance, i.e., two cavalry regiments called Shahbā' ("shining white" in view of their armor) and Dausar ("two-headed," Pers. *do sar*). See Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 83, n. 3; 85, who doubts the report on account of Yazdgird's peaceful relations with Byzantium, as does Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, p. 62, whereas I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, pp. 24ff., finds it probable. A century later Mundhir (III?) raided as far as Palestine and possibly even Egypt; see Procopius I. xvii. 41; Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, p. 46; Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, pp. 24-25. The sequence and chronology of Lakhmid rulers is not always clear in the sources and much confusion occurs in relating these rulers to their Sassanian sovereigns. S. Smith in "Events in Arabia," p. 430, provides a list of the Lakhmid rulers and their regnal dates with the dates of the corresponding Sassanian kings; cf. Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, pp. 50-87 for a discussion of the names and the sequence of the Lakhmids in different sources.

⁹⁷ Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," pp. 600f. where the exercise of influence on Yathrib is treated in more detail. See also F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte*, pp. 141ff. and below, p. 27ff.

⁹⁸ Arabic and Persian chronicles relate (see, e.g., Tabarī I/2, pp. 850f.) that Yazdgird I had his son and crown prince, the future Bahrām V, brought up at the court of his Lakhmid vassal Nu'mān (I, d. after 418 CE) who had a palace built called al-Khawarnaq for the Sassanian crown prince. Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, I, p. 131f., basing himself on an indirect quote from Jāhiz, says that the palace was one of the thirty wonders of the world. (I owe this reference to my colleague Dr. M. Mahdavi Dāmghāni); see also Mas'ūdi, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, pars. 233, 1060 and Maqdīsī, *Bad'*, III, pp. 165, 200. For other references see *Khitaṭ*, I, p. 132, n. 6 and Massignon, *EP*, IV, p. 1133b. Khawarnaq, according to F. C. Andreas, is a Middle Persian word, *huvarnak-chu, "good," and *varna-ka from the root var, "to cover, protect," therefore meaning "bestowing good protection" or "having a nice roof." See Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, pp. 144-45. On linguistic grounds (-rn- instead of the later -r-) Andreas attributed the building of the palace or castle to no later than 100 CE (Rothstein, p. 144). Nöldeke's suggestion of a possible Arabic or Aramaic derivation (*Perser und Araber*, p. 79, n. 3) is hardly tenable. For the titles bestowed on Nu'mān's

Persian culture spread to the rest of the Arabian peninsula. As Irfan Shahid notes, the Lakhmids' "fruitful association with Persia is reflected in the various forms of their military, political, and social life and of their material culture."⁹⁹ And as he notes further:

For almost three centuries, al-Hīra stood almost alone as a metropolis radiating higher forms of culture to the Arabs of the Peninsula; and of all the elements of culture that mattered, the most important was undoubtedly the development of the Arabic script and of written Arabic, called for by the demands of an organized and stable urban life in al-Hīra.¹⁰⁰

The Yemen. Another source of Persian presence in pre-Islamic Arabia, besides Hīra, was the Persian conquest of the Yemen. In the sixth century, the troubled conditions in that country provided an opportunity for the Sassanians to intervene in its affairs and extend their political control to south Arabia. The decline of the old Himyarite kingdom and its Arabian paganism, the pressure from Abyssinian Monophysite Christians, and the resistance of the Yemenite Jews, who championed the cause of national independence, all helped to create an unstable situation beset by confessional strife, political intrigues, and incessant rivalries.¹⁰¹

Dhū Nuwās, the Yemenite leader who had embraced Judaism ("Tahawwada," Ḥamza Isfahānī, p. 133) and secured the throne of the Yemen, had apparently been encouraged in his anti-Christian policy by Mundhir III, the king of Hīra, who was himself a pagan although the Christian subjects were Nestorian and at odds with Abyssinian Monophysites.¹⁰² One may surmise that in his encouragement of Dhū Nuwās, Mundhir had the backing of his Sassanian overlord, who could not have been pleased with the expansion of Byzantine influence in Arabia.

According to Procopius, *Persian Wars* I.xx.1-13, a few years before 531 the king of Abyssinia, urged by the Roman emperor Justinian and wanting to defend his Christian coreligionists, who

son, Mundhir, who supervised the building of Khawarnaq, see Tabarī I/2, p. 855 and Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 86f.

⁹⁹ *EP*, V, p. 634a. M. Enger, "Über das Vizirat," p. 240, concluded that the office of vizierate was adopted by the kings of Hīra from the Sassanians under the name *ridf*, which originated the Abbasid office of the vizier. See, however, D. Sourdel, *Vizirat*, I, p. 42, for a criticism of this view.

¹⁰⁰ *EP*, V, p. 634b. See also Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 598. Cf., however, Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, p. 410, who now seems to favor "Oriens" (i.e., *Shām*) as the cradle of Arabic script.

¹⁰¹ See Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," pp. 604ff., and Tabarī I/2, pp. 901ff.

¹⁰² Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 605.

were being persecuted by Yemenite pagans and Jews, invaded south Arabia, killed its king, and installed a vassal in his place. The puppet-king, however, proved unpopular and could not suppress the revolt against him. His place was taken by Abraha (seemingly an Abyssinian form of Abraham),¹⁰³ originally a slave of a Byzantine merchant, according to Procopius.

In an inscription that commemorates the completion of the repairs to the dam of Ma'rib, Abraha claims that he received envoys from Ethiopia, Byzantium, Persia, Hira, and the Ghassanid court. Justinian encouraged him to invade Hira, but he cautiously did no more than pretend to do so (Procopius, *Persian Wars* I.xx.13). He did, however, attack and defeat the Ma'add tribe in central Arabia which was controlled by the Lakhmid 'Amr ibn Mundhir III.¹⁰⁴ It is probably this expedition to the north to meet the Lakhmid army which is echoed in the Koran, *sūra* 105, as an invasion of Mecca by "the people of the elephant" (*aṣḥāb al-fil*) with the intention of destroying the Ka'ba. (The Meccans were allegedly taken by surprise when elephants appeared at the head of south Arabian forces.)¹⁰⁵

The unpopularity of the Ethiopian garrison in the Yemen eventually provided a nationalist reaction, led by Saif ibn Dhī Yazan, who, after negotiating in vain with the Ghassanids (Ṭabarī II/1, pp. 946–52), approached Khusrau I Anūshirvān with help from the Lakhmid ruler 'Amr ibn Hind and managed to overcome the king's initial reluctance to intervene.¹⁰⁶ Khusrau sent a force¹⁰⁷ headed by a nobleman, Wahriz,¹⁰⁸ to expel the Abyssinians. They sailed in eight ships; two sank on the way and six landed on the shores of the Yemen. The Abyssinians were crushed and Saif ibn Dhī Yazan installed on

¹⁰³ Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, p. 191, n. 1. See Smith, "Events in Arabia," pp. 431–41, for the detail of his career. ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 606; Beeston, *EP*, III, p. 102b.

¹⁰⁵ The Koran does not mention Abraha, but the exegetes and historians identify him as the leader of *aṣḥāb al-fil*; see, e.g., Hamza Isfahāni, p. 135.

¹⁰⁶ As Nöldeke notes, *Perser und Araber*, p. 223, n. 2, Khusrau's motive for intervention, apart from material gains, must have been to weaken Byzantine influence in the Yemen and disrupt its trade with Byzantium by establishing political control over south Arabia. The conflict between the great powers, Persia and Byzantium, he points out, "had repercussions in the remotest regions such as Italy, the Yemen, and the shores of the Aral Lake."

¹⁰⁷ According to Ibn Ishāq's version of the story, Ṭabarī II/1, pp. 252ff., it consisted of 800 men, all prisoners marked for execution (political prisoners or Mazdakites?). The measure was taken on the advice of the religious leader (*mōbadān mōbad*), who argued that if they lost it would be a good riddance, and if they won the benefits would accrue to the king.

¹⁰⁸ On Wahriz see Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, p. 223, n. 2. Wahriz is a title, however, not a personal name; see Marquart, *Ērānshahr*, p. 126. His personal name is given by Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, p. 260, and Hamza Isfahāni, p. 138, as Khurrazād b. Narsi b. Jāmās.

the throne of the Yemen as a Persian tributary.¹⁰⁹ Saif unleashed his wrath upon the defeated Abyssinians and had many of them killed, but he himself was killed in the course of a retaliatory attempt. Khusrau sent Wahriz back with four thousand men to finish the Abyssinians once and for all and secure the country. He appointed Wahriz, after his victory, governor of the Yemen, which henceforth became a Persian dependency.

Eight Persian governors from Wahriz to Dādawayh (Dādōe) ruled Yemen in succession;¹¹⁰ the last but one, Bādhān (or Bādhām),¹¹¹ was contemporary with Muḥammad and entered into an agreement with the Prophet. The members of the Persian garrison that was left behind in the Yemen were gradually assimilated by the Arabs of the region, particularly after the rise of Islam and the collapse of the Sassanian power, when they were cut off from their homeland. Their descendants, however, known as *Abnā'* (Sons), continued as a distinct group for some time after Islam¹¹² and must have served as a channel for transmitting Persian notions and ideas to the Arabs, as Goldziher notes.¹¹³

The Hijāz. Persian penetration into Arabia was not confined, however, to the Yemen, the Lakhmid kingdom, and the eastern coasts of the peninsula. The Sassanians attempted to extend their control, through their vassals, as far as the Hijāz, Mecca, and Yathrib (later Medina) in particular. Such attempts were motivated, apart from general imperial ambitions, by commercial interests and a desire to counter Byzantine influence.

Whereas the Persian presence in Hira, its dependencies, and the Yemen is well documented and evident, it is less so in the case of the Hijāz, partly because of the paucity of reliable documents of the history of the Hijāz itself in pre-Islamic periods. Nonetheless, a careful reading of the available sources leaves no doubt as to the Sassanian attempt at the political domination of the region and its occasional success. Theodore Nöldeke, in detailed notes to his

¹⁰⁹ A narrative in epic mode, quoted from Ibn Ishāq in Ṭabarī II/1, p. 954, relates that when Wahriz realized the relative smallness of his force compared to that of Masrūq ibn Abraha, he ordered his ships and the extra clothes of his men burned and all remaining food to be thrown into the sea. Then he exhorted his soldiers, saying that there was no way back: they had to win or die. They pledged to fight to the last drop of their blood, and fought valiantly, killing many Abyssinians and taking a huge number of prisoners.

¹¹⁰ Hamza Isfahāni, p. 136, lists their names; cf. Ṭabarī II/1, p. 958.

¹¹¹ According to Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, p. 237, n. 4, Bādhān is the Arabization of Bādhām. ¹¹² See *ibid.*, p. 120, n. 4.

¹¹³ "Islamisme et parsisme," pp. 23–24.

translation of the Sassanian section of Tabarī's *History*,¹¹⁴ and then Gustav Rothstein, in his monograph on the Lakhmid dynasty of Ḥīra,¹¹⁵ had drawn on both Islamic and non-Islamic sources (especially Syriac and Byzantine) to elucidate the relations between Persia and Ḥīra, and through them with the rest of Arabia.¹¹⁶ M. J. Kister, in an erudite article, "Al-Ḥīra: Some Notes on its Relations with Arabia," *Arabica*, 15 (1968), furnishes additional data on the Persian presence in the Ḥijāz by drawing particularly on Traditions (*ḥadīths*) and Koranic exegeses. His findings may be summarized as follows:

On the basis of Traditions and the comments on the Koranic verse 8:26, Kister concludes that the people of the peninsula were apprehensive about the power of Persia and Byzantium, conscious of their rivalry, and wary of Persia's effort to gain control over the Ḥijāz (pp. 134-44). A Tradition recorded by the thirteenth-century author Ibn Sa'īd reports an interesting attempt by Persia to cast its power over Mecca: When Qubādh embraced the faith of Mazdak and deposed the Lakhmid king, who had refused to follow suit, he demanded that his successor, Ḥārith al-Kindī, impose this faith on the Arabs of Najd and Tihāma. In Mecca some adopted Mazdakism (*tazandaqa*), and when Islam appeared, there was still a group of people who were recognized as former Mazdakites.¹¹⁷ There were, however, people who refrained from adopting this faith (pp. 144f). Ibn Khurdādhbih records a Tradition¹¹⁸ according to which the *marzubān al-bādiya* ("the governor of the desert region," i.e., a representative of the vassal king of Ḥīra) appointed a tax-collector on Medina. The report finds support in a Tradition quoted by Yāqūt (*Buldān*, IV, p. 460).¹¹⁹ It seems that the practice was connected with the domination of the Jews over the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, although in his *Naswat al-tarab* Ibn Sa'īd gives important details about the continuity of Sassanian control of Medina even after the Jewish domination had ended (pp. 146f.). Further, Ibn Sa'īd reports that fighting often broke out between Jews and Aws and Khazraj, until 'Amr b. ʿIṣnāba entered

¹¹⁴ *Perser und Araber* (1879). ¹¹⁵ *Dynastie der Lakhmiden* (1899).

¹¹⁶ Further contributions can be found in Altheim and Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte*, pp. 141ff.

¹¹⁷ On Mazdakism see Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 141-43, 154-55, 169, n. 4, and 455-67; O. Klima, *Mazdak*; O. Klima, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus*; A. Christensen, *Le Règne du roi Kawād et le communisme mazdakite*; E. Yarshater, "Mazdakism," pp. 991-1024, and M. Shaki, "The Social Doctrine of Mazdak."

¹¹⁸ *Masālik*, p. 128; Kister, "Al-Ḥīra," p. 145.

¹¹⁹ The report is doubted by Caskel and Hirschberg (see Kister, "Al-Ḥīra," p. 146), but considered sound by Altheim and Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte*, pp. 143-44, 149, and by Kister, pp. 146-47.

the court of Nu'mān ibn Mundhir, the king of Ḥīra, and was appointed by him the ruler (*mallakahu*) of Medina. Ibn Sa'īd quotes a satirical poem by the father of Ḥassān b. Thābit against this 'Amr, which confirms the authenticity of the story. It also conforms to the Tradition cited by Ibn Khurdādhbih and "attests the continuity of Persian control over Medina during the second part of the 6th century" (p. 149).

On the political impact of Sassanian Persia on Arabia we have further information from Ibn Ḥabīb, who shows a clear line of division in his *al-Muḥabbar* between the tribes whose chiefs cooperated with Persia or its vassal Ḥīra, and therefore were granted fiefs as a reward, and those who chose a policy of independence (p. 150). Sassanian monarchs granted some fiefs to the rulers of Ḥīra, who were to use the revenue both to pay their expenses and to win the cooperation or obedience of other tribes.¹²⁰ A story in *al-Naqā'id*¹²¹ about Qurra ibn Hubayra, to whom Nu'mān entrusted his caravan in 'Ukāz, reflects the commercial link between Ḥīra and the Ḥijāz. Another story reported in Balādhurī, Ibn Kalbī, and Ibn Athīr (see Kister, p. 154 for references) about Nu'mān's instigation of the Ma'add and other tribes to attack the tribe of Banū 'Amir after their return from 'Ukāz shows not only the commercial interests of Ḥīra, and as a result Persia, in the Ḥijāz, but also the way that the kings of Ḥīra used intertribal conflicts to further their own interests and maintain their control.

According to the detailed account given by Abu'l-Baqā', Imru'l-Qays al-Badan adopted the division of the troops of Kisrā for his own troops, giving them names which remained in use until the end of the kingdom of Ḥīra (p. 166).

If I have lingered somewhat on the Perso-Arab relations prior to Islam, it is because what happened among the Arabs (as well as among other major constituents of the Muslim community) before the rise of Islam has a direct bearing on the development of Islamic civilization. Thus, so that the Persian presence in the Islamic world may be appreciated, its longer roots among the Arabs should be taken into account.

It is worth observing that the animus that the Arabs exhibited

¹²⁰ According to Abu'l-Baqā' in his *Manāqib* (apud Kister, "Al-Ḥīra," pp. 150ff.) Nu'mān, the ruler of Ḥīra, collected 100,000 dirhams in taxes from the fief that was granted to him by the Persian king. On the granting of fiefs to Arab tribal chiefs see also Morony, *Iraq*, p. 152.

¹²¹ Edited by Bevan (Leiden, 1905), p. 404, apud Kister, "Al-Ḥīra," p. 155.

toward the Persians after the conquest, so well studied by Goldziher (*Muslim Studies*, I, pp. 98–102), seems to have been at least partly due to Persian domination through the agency of the Lakhmid kings and the tax burdens imposed by them on a number of Arab tribes. Kister illustrates a number of quarrels, battles, and the killings that resulted from the imposition of taxes on reluctant tribes (pp. 161–63). Rothstein gives a description of the military forces of the Lakhmids, consisting of four divisions and different elements, one of them, *wadā'ī*, consisting of soldiers of the Persian army who were assigned to one year's tour of duty, after which term they were replaced by fresh soldiers. They were the real force behind the Lakhmids both aiding and controlling them.¹²²

III In the Koran and the *ḥadīth* and early Arabic works

With extensive and varied contacts between Arabs and Persians, particularly in the course of the sixth century, it is hardly surprising that a number of Islamic concepts and practices should have been adopted from or influenced by the tenets of Iranian religions. A number of historians of religion have addressed the question, identifying the instances. Among these are the eschatological notions of resurrection, the bridge between heaven and hell that the resurrected bodies will have to cross, millenarian and Messianic beliefs, and the catastrophic end of the world. They are believed to have resulted either from the direct contact between the Arabs and Persia or more often through post-exilic Judaism, and to a lesser extent Christianity, whose development is thought to have been influenced by Zoroastrian ideas.¹²³ To quote Mary Boyce, a chief proponent of Zoroastrian influences:

Zoroaster was thus the first to teach the doctrines of an individual judgment, Heaven and Hell, the future resurrection of the body, the general Last Judgment, and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body. These doctrines

¹²² Rothstein, *Dynastie der Lakhmiden*, pp. 133–38. Cf. Kister, "Al-Hira," pp. 165–68; Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," pp. 599f.

¹²³ For a detailed discussion of Zoroastrian influences in the Hellenistic world and in particular on Judaism, and through it on Christianity, see Boyce's "Zoroastrian Contributions," pp. 361–490, and references given there. The influence exerted by Iranian traditions on Islam and the Arabs has been discussed by, among others, E. Blochet, I. Goldziher, C. Inostranzev, T. Andrae, L. Gray, G. Widengren, A. Bausani, W. Eilers, J. Duchesne-Guillemin, C. E. Bosworth, and S. Shaked; see below. For Iranian borrowings from Greece, some of which has passed to Islam, see Shaked, "Paymān: An Iranian Idea," in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, pp. 217ff. and references given there.

were to become familiar articles of faith to much of mankind, through borrowings by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (*Zoroastrians*, p. 29)¹²⁴

However, whereas the Persian elements can be more clearly distinguished in Islamic Traditions (the *ḥadīth*), which often reflect or confirm local customs, practices, and ideas, such elements cannot always be established with precision in the Koran.¹²⁵ The uncompromising and austere monotheism of the Prophet Muḥammad has molded even adaptations of Judeo-Christian concepts and terms in such a fashion that they lose their original coloring and strike one as freshly conceived. The pervasive force of his belief in the unity of God makes, in the words of Alessandro Bausani, the Old Testament itself seem almost "polytheistic" in comparison.¹²⁶ Furthermore, it does not appear that Muḥammad had had direct contact with a living community practicing an Iranian religion. Nonetheless it is clear that Zoroastrianism belonged to Muḥammad's religious horizon. In fact, he mentions the Magi (*al-majūs*), along with Jews, Sabeans, and the Christians in contrast to idolaters in the Koran 22.17.

We must also allow that some of the coincidences between the Koran and Iranian religious texts or ideas may have resulted from the

¹²⁴ The date of Zoroaster has special relevance here. The seventh to sixth centuries BCE, which follows the Zoroastrian tradition of 258 years prior to Alexander, found a strong following subsequent to Henning's acceptance and advocacy of it in his influential *Zoroaster: Witchdoctor or Politician?* (1951, pp. 37ff.), but this date was later challenged by a number of scholars who joined some earlier scholars, including C. Bartholomae, O. G. Wesendonk, H. H. Schaeder, and Ed. Meyer, by putting the date of the Prophet earlier, generally between 1100 and 800 BCE. Among these, one may mention T. Burrow ("The Proto-Indoaryans"); A. Sh. Shahbazi ("The 'Traditional Date of Zoroaster' Explained"); H. Humbach (*The Gāthās*, pp. 24ff. and 48ff.); and J. Kellens (*Leçon inaugurale*, Collège de France, p. 22). M. Boyce, however, places him in the Bronze Age, between 1500 and 1100, with preference given to 1200 (the latest presentation of her arguments is found in her *Zoroastrianism* [1992, pp. 1–26]). Parsi and Persian scholars tend to opt for the earlier dates. G. Gnoli has given a good deal of attention to this question in his *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland* (1980, particularly pp. 159–79), and again in *De Zoroastre à Mani* (1985, pp. 35ff.). Originally he suggested a date from the turn of the first millennium to about 900 (*De Zoroastre à Mani*, p. 38), but recently in his Yarshater lecture series on Zoroaster and his time, given in May 1997 at the University of California, Los Angeles, he has modified his views and confirmed Henning's stance, as has I. Gershevich, an ardent defender of Henning's opinions, whose article "Approaches to Zoroaster's Gathas" vehemently refuses other theories.

¹²⁵ Some elements, however, for instance, Hārūt and Mārūt, verse 2. 96, as well as some words borrowed from Iranian, can be pinpointed; see Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, pp. 282f. and below.

¹²⁶ *Persia religiosa*, p. 144. Cf. Goldziher's remark: "For this man, dominated as he was by the idea of absolute monotheism, the idea of a God clouded by the dualism of the Magi could not be a source of religious teaching as were the surrounding religious systems, which he took to be degenerate forms of *dīn [brāhīm]* (the religion of Abraham)" ("Islamisme et parsisme," p. 24).

reverse process of the effect of Islam on Zoroastrian ninth-tenth-century books, which are our chief source for Sassanian Zoroastrianism, even though their contents generally go back to pre-Islamic times.¹²⁷

The first serious attempt to address the question of Iranian influence on Islam was by the noted French orientalist Edgar Blochet,¹²⁸ who in his article "Etudes sur l'histoire religieuse de l'Iran, II: L'Ascension au ciel du prophète Mohammed" in two parts (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1899) concluded, after examining all relevant sources, that the source of the legend as developed by Traditionalists and exegetes with regard to the Prophet's ascent into heaven on the basis of the rather laconic and ambiguous Koranic verse 17.1 could not be other than the heavenly journeys in Iranian tradition, of which the best-known example is that of Ardā Virāz and his visit to heaven and hell¹²⁹ – a legend which served also as the ultimate prototype for Dante's *Divina commedia*.¹³⁰ He strengthens his thesis by arguing that Burāq, the mount with the body of a donkey and a human face on which the Prophet is said to have made his ascent, is a foreign term derived from Middle Persian *bārak* (Pers. *bāra*), "mount," used in somewhat similar contexts (pp. 212–13).¹³¹

Blochot's article was followed by Goldziher's earnest and more

¹²⁷ See Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, p. 144. For a survey of these works see E. W. West, "Pahlavi Literature," pp. 75–129; and J. de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Literature," pp. 543–65.

¹²⁸ Earlier sporadic references to such borrowings, however, are not lacking; see, e.g., J. Darmesteter, who mentions the adoption of the times of the canonical prayers in Islam from Zoroastrian *gāhs* (*Chants populaires des Afghans*, p. 261).

¹²⁹ "It follows therefore," Blochet concludes, "that it is in Iranian Mazdaism that the origin of the legend of the ascension of the prophet Muhammad to heaven and his journey through paradise and hell are to be sought" (p. 9). For the latest translations of the Middle Persian text which contains the legend, see Ph. Gignoux, *Le Livre d'Ardā Virāz*, and F. Vahman, *Ardā Virāz Nāmag*. For a similar journey by the Zoroastrian priest, Kirdir, described in his inscriptions, see P. O. Skjærvø, "Kirdir's Vision: Translation and Analysis," pp. 269–306; and Gignoux, *Le Livre d'Ardā Virāz*, pp. 18–20. For Zoroaster's vision of his Lord, see M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, I, p. 185, n. 23. See further S. Shaked, "Iranian Themes," in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, pp. 144f.

¹³⁰ There is considerable literature on the subject; see Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, p. 145; W. Hinz, "Dantes persische Vorläufer," pp. 117–26; Ph. Gignoux, "Ardā Virāz," in *Elr*, II, pp. 356f. with bibliography, and Miguel Asís y Palacios, *La escatología musulmana* (Eng. tr. *Islam and the Divine Comedy* apud Vahman, *Ardā Virāz Nāmag*, p. 15, n. 19).

¹³¹ In an earlier article, "De l'influence de la religion mazdéenne sur les croyances des peuples turcs," (1898), Blochet had averred that the halo seen around the head of Muhammad and other prophets as well as Jesus' apostles had its origin in the "royal glory" (*x'arāna*, *furrah*), which was conceived as tongues of flame descending on the head of legitimate kings (p. 29, n. 4).

comprehensive article "Islamisme et Parsisme" (1901). "Until now," he wrote, "less attention has been paid to one of the most important elements of the religious development of Islam, that is, the Persian element."¹³² Exercised under the two forms of *borrowing* and *reaction*, it has been a decisive influence on the formation of the character of Islam" (p. 7).

Among the Persian influences that he attributes to the time of the emergence of Islam, he includes the following: the prescription of five daily canonical prayers, modeled on the Zoroastrian practice, after it had been fixed at three times a day; eschatological elements, transmitted partly through the mediation of Judaism and Christianity (especially the Book of Enoch) and partly directly;¹³³ the harsh view of the *kāfirs* or unbelievers and counting them as ritually unclean¹³⁴ (this is less compatible, he remarks, with the Judeo-Christian notion of polytheism and unbelief than with the Zoroastrian attitude toward unbelievers and heretics; cf. *Vidēvdād* V. 37); designating Friday as a counterpart of the Jewish Sabbath, and yet not as a day of rest, which conforms better to the Zoroastrian belief that creation was realized in six stages, but was not followed by a period of inactivity for Ahura Mazda.¹³⁵

Goldziher draws attention also to a number of developments and practices that show Persian influence and are reflected in Traditions and legal texts. These are, for instance, religious prescriptions concerning ritual purity, particularly with respect to the uncleanness of the human corpse, treated so prominently in the Avestan text of *Vidēvdād* and its commentaries; meritorious recitation or chanting of holy texts, especially the Koran, and the Shi'ite practice of having the Koran chanted during the mourning periods for the happiness of the soul of the departed, comparable to the same practice among the Zoroastrians for the remission of the sins of the deceased or the living; the weighing of the good and evil deeds in scales (*mizān*) at the Day

¹³² Italic in the original.

¹³³ "It is generally recognized," he writes, "that the eschatological elements of the Koran beside Persian ideas that had spread through the intermediaries of Judaism and Christianity admit of having been borrowed directly from the Persians" (p. 22).

¹³⁴ He notes that verse 9. 28, "inna'ma'l mushrikūna najisūn," is mitigated in Sunnite interpretation, but kept in force among the Shi'ites (pp. 25–26). Shaked, "Some Iranian Themes in Islamic Literature," p. 150, n. 39, furnishes a Zoroastrian parallel text from *Sad dar-i-nathr*, p. 38: "It is necessary to make an effort so as to abstain from (using) the same cup as a man of different religion (*jud-dēn*)."

¹³⁵ See Shaked, "Iranian Themes," pp. 145–46 for his reservation on this point. Cf. D. S. Goitein, "The Origin and Nature of Muslim Friday Worship," pp. 118ff., who tried to derive *yawm al-jum'a* from Hebrew *yom hakkenisa*, "the day of the assembly."

of Judgment and the use of quantitative, numerical yardsticks to measure them,¹³⁶ as well as recourse to certain formulaic numbers in both religions;¹³⁷ the inordinate number of Traditions on the merits of the use of the toothbrush (*miswāk*), considered a virtuous act also among the Zoroastrians (*Shāyast na shāyast* 10.20; 12.13; *Dāstān ī dīnik*, 40.8)¹³⁸ – a revealing detail. Among the influences through opposition and negative reaction he cites the attitude toward the dog, a sacred animal in Mazdaism, but ending as ritually unclean in Islam.¹³⁹

Goldziher furnishes references to both Islamic and Iranian sources to prove his remarks, but in spite of the almost passionate tone of his article, he reminds the reader – cautious scholar that he is – that his thesis is only a hypothesis (p. 29) and not the last word on the issues raised.

A year later in 1902 Louis Gray's article "Zoroastrian Elements in Muhammadan Eschatology" appeared. Basing himself as far as Islam was concerned largely on the works of Wolff¹⁴⁰ and Rüling,¹⁴¹ Gray drew a detailed list of parallels between Zoroastrian eschatological beliefs and Islamic ones as they are expressed in the Koran or in popular Islam, including bodily resurrection, personification of one's deeds in the form of a beautiful or abominable figure, the angels who record men's deeds or question the soul of the deceased, judgment of the soul by weighing its actions in a balance, the bridge to be crossed which is as thin as a hair or sharp as a razor's edge for sinners but wide for the virtuous, punishment in hell or reward in paradise, and an intermediate station between the two (*hamēstagān* in Zoroastrianism, *a'raf* in Islam, pp. 177f.). He drew particularly on

¹³⁶ E.g., the Tradition quoted from the Prophet (*Usd al-ghāba*, I, p. 172) that whoever performs the canonical prayers for the dead before the stretcher merits one carat (*qirāt*) (of reward), but he who assists with the ceremonies until the deceased is buried merits two, each of which weighs as much as Mount Uhud (p. 12).

¹³⁷ E.g., the number 33, which occurs in both Zoroastrianism and Islam recommended for certain acts as especially efficacious (p. 14).

¹³⁸ Shaked provides further references to Zoroastrian texts ("Iranian Themes," p. 149, n. 35).

¹³⁹ He shows (p. 18) that dogs were not considered unclean at the time of the Prophet and were even allowed in the mosque. Shaked ("Iranian Themes," p. 148) draws attention to the following passage in Jāhīz's *Ketāb al-hayawān*, I, p. 174: "The Prophet commanded us to kill dogs. He later prohibited us from killing them, saying, 'Beware [only] the black, dark (*bahīm*) [dog], which has two dots over its two eyes, for that one is a devil.'" The description is that of the dogs used by Zoroastrians in the *sag-dīd* ritual, in which the corpse is exposed to a dog. See M. Boyce, *Elr*, VII, pp. 467–69 on the ritual.

¹⁴⁰ *Muhammedanische Eschatologie* (Leipzig, 1872).

¹⁴¹ *Beiträge zur Eschatologie des Islam* (Leipzig, 1895).

Ghazālī's *al-Durra al-fākhira*, which bears striking resemblance to Zoroastrian writing on the fate of departing souls and the final judgment (pp. 156, 158ff.).¹⁴² In some respects, however, the two traditions are divergent, one major difference being that in Islam reward and punishment are eternal, whereas in the Zoroastrian faith all souls are eventually purified and admitted to the blissful renovated world (p. 179). Gray also briefly compares the notion of a savior in both faiths (*sōšyānt* in Zoroastrianism, *mahdī* in Islam, p. 180), a topic that Darmesteter had treated earlier in detail (*The Mahdī, Past and Present* [New York, 1885]). Gray shows awareness of the existence of some of the above ideas also in Christianity (p. 185), but does not concern himself with channels of transmission.¹⁴³

K. Inostrancev in his *Sasanidskie Et'udy*, published in 1909, stressed the importance of studying Sassanian civilization in order to understand better the Sassanians' effect on Islamic culture and devoted a chapter each to, among others, Sassanian literature (pp. 1ff.), war techniques and weapons (pp. 46ff.), and Naurūz and Mihragān festivals and their respective ceremonies (pp. 81ff.), stressing their effect on the Islamic society of earlier centuries with liberal quotations from Arabic sources, without, however, specifying any additional cases of borrowing related to pre-Islamic Arabia. He does draw attention, however, to pre-Islamic monuments (palaces, fire-temples, etc.) that continued to exist for several centuries after Islam and have been described by Muslim geographers and travelers (pp. 4f.). He also stresses the continued existence of large Zoroastrian communities in Persian provinces, Fārs in particular, during the first centuries of Islam (*ibid.*).

In his *Die Person Muhammads* (1917), pp. 30f., Tor Andrae drew attention to the similarity of the events which occurred in conjunction with the birth of the Prophet of Islam and those recounted in the *Dēnkart* about the birth of Zoroaster.¹⁴⁴ In his later work on

¹⁴² Cf. Shaked, "Iranian Themes," p. 144: "One fairly large topic on which there is quite clear evidence of close affinity between Iranian and Islamic ideas so as to suggest probable dependence is eschatology. Islamic eschatology derived a good deal of material from Jewish and Christian sources, which in their turn were also dependent, it seems, on Iranian antecedent. But there are elements in the Islamic treatment of eschatological events that derive quite clearly from Iran."

¹⁴³ Gray notes at the end of his article Böhlen's book, *Verwandschaft der jüdisch-christlichen mit der persischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen, 1902), on the relationship of Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian eschatology, mentioning pp. 10f., 15, 30f., 38, 42–44, 56, 58–60, 68, 111, 115, 117, 127, 144 as relevant.

¹⁴⁴ For the legends of Zoroaster's birth, see Molé, *Légende*, pp. 15ff. and Āmūzīgār and Tafazzoli, *Ustūra*, pp. 59ff.

Muḥammad, he saw "definite traces of Manichaean teaching" in the Koranic notion (4.156) that the Jews neither killed nor crucified Jesus, who merely appeared so to them, but God took him up to himself, a doctrine espoused by the Manichaeans (pp. 112f.).

Among the scholars who have devoted much research to interaction between the peoples of the Middle East and cultural exchange between them is Geo Widengren. In his monograph *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God* (1945) he explored the conception of a cosmic soul or divine principle in the traditions of the Middle East and its manifestation in an apostle or human revealer, the Gnostic orientation of the concept, and the possibility that the Manichaean and Gnostic notion of the cosmic divine principle developed out of an ancient Iranian doctrine, namely the encounter of Zoroaster with Vohu Manah (p. 8). Widengren understands Vohu Manah to be the universal mind or soul, which works also inside individuals, uniting them to their spiritual source (pp. 60ff.), comparable to the unity of *ātman* and *brāhman* in the *Upanishads* (p. 73).

The old concept of an apostle or a "messenger" underlying the Koranic description of Muḥammad as *rasūl Allāh*, as well as the claims of several Persian heresiarchs of the eighth century to be "messengers," was further elaborated by Widengren in a subsequent monograph, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and His Ascension* (1955). He distinguished two kinds of divulging divine secrets to a prophet or apostle: either the celestial Ego descends in some way to the apostle revealing God's message and investing him with his mission, as seen in Mani's meeting with his "Twin" (pp. 206, 214) and Zoroaster's meeting with Vohu Manah; or the apostle ascends to heaven to meet his God and to be initiated in divine secrets, as found in Jewish and Christian writing, especially apocalyptic literature, and as Zoroaster was taken by Vohu Manah to the presence of Ahura Mazda. As the Judeo-Christian traditions "do not know of an angel who is the higher ego of the Prophet," whereas this is a special trait in Iranian religions, it follows, he concludes, that this pattern of ascension has its original context in Iranian religions, from where it has been brought into Jewish and Christian traditions (p. 205). Associated with this ascent is also the concept of the receiving of the heavenly tablets and a vision of hell, both having antecedents in Iranian religions. The ascent is exemplified in Islam by the Prophet's journey to the presence of his Lord, led by the archangel Gabriel, and his being entrusted with revelations from *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz* or the Guarded Tablet

(pp. 206ff.).¹⁴⁵ In a more sweeping conclusion at the end of *Die Religionen Irans* (1965) Widengren states: "It is from Iran that proceed all eschatology and all apocalypse. The doctrine of the periods and of resurrection of bodies are specifically Iranian dogmas, and they have attained great significance later" (p. 392).

Alessandro Bausani took a fresh look at the question of Iranian impact on Islam and its development in his *Persia religiosa* (1959). He lists (pp. 135-47) a number of cases where he has detected Iranian influence:

(a) In the Koran 7. 172 the Lord asks the children of Adam: "Am I not your Lord?" They say, "Yes, we testify."¹⁴⁶ He quotes two passages, one from *Bundahishn*, 3. 21-22, on the "choice" made by man's *fravashi* or preexisting spirit to go into the corporeal world when asked by Ahura Mazda to choose between either remaining free from aggression and facing Ahriman or securing immortal bliss at the end; and a passage from *Ayātkār ī Jāmāspīk* (ed. Messina, p. 37 of the text, p. 38 of the translation)¹⁴⁷ on the choice made by the Amēsha Spēntas or Holy Immortals when asked by Ahura Mazda who was their lord and master. Bausani believes that "the essence of the Koranic passage lies precisely in the concept of primordial choice which . . . is so typically Iranian" (p. 140), but that it must have been taken from a Jewish source familiar with the Iranian idea.

(b) Hārūt and Mārūt (Koran 2. 96) are in name some distant echoes, filtered through complex sources, of the two Zoroastrian Amēsha Spēntas, Haurvatāt and Amertāt.

(c) The Koranic allusion to shooting stars being hurled at the demons (Koran 15. 17-18; 37. 7-9; 67. 5; 72. 8-9) has a counterpart in a Mazdean concept (cf. *Mēnōk ī xrat* 49, and *Ayātkār ī Jāmāspīk*, p. 41 of the text, p. 92 of the translation).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ This thesis is elaborated in Widengren's *Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (1950). In his *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung* (1960) he explores the various aspects of Parthian influence in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Syria and advocates the theory that many of the Gnostic concepts and motifs, including the birth of the savior, whose coming would be announced by a star (pp. 67f.) and would be awaited by the Magi, have their origin in Iranian religions (i.e. Mazdaism, Mithraism, Manichaeism).

¹⁴⁶ Bausani notes that Nallino, *Op Compl.*, II, p. 213, defined the verse as "a curious Koranic passage for which no scholar has thus far indicated a source"; nor does Blachère in his commentary on the Koran (1944-51); but there is nothing "curious" about it, Bausani claims, for an Iranian, for whom it has a familiar ring (pp. 138-39).

¹⁴⁷ References given in the text are Bausani's, who in numbering the Koranic verses follows Flügel's edition.

¹⁴⁸ It should be noted, however, that in the passages that Bausani refers to there is no mention of "hurling" stars at demons, but that some stars are designated to bar the demons from entering the gates they protect (*Mēnōk ī xrat*), and seven demonesses (*parīks*) in the form of the planets are fought off by six (good) stars (*Ayātkār ī Jāmāspīk*).

(d) The very close similarity between the Koranic argument against those who deny the resurrection of the flesh after it has been dispersed (e.g., 29. 19–20) and the argument in the Pahlavi books, for instance, *Zātspram* 34: "When those creatures did not yet exist, I had the power to fashion them, and now that they have been and are dispersed it is easier to recompose them" (text and translation in R. C. Zaehner, *BSOAS*, 10 [1940], pp. 377–98; cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 343 of the text and p. 348 of the translation, and *Bundahishn*, quoted by G. Messina in *Orientalia* [1935], p. 270).

(e) Koran's reference to God's color (2. 138) recalls a passage in the *Dēnkart* (see *Dēnkart* III. 27; B 15–17; M 21–24; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 379, 381).¹⁴⁹

(f) The blessed will have, according to Koran 56. 89, *rauh* and *raiḥān* in heaven, which recalls a passage in *Mēnōk ī xrat* 7 in which "a fragrant breeze and a scent like that of sweet basil¹⁵⁰ come to meet the righteous in heaven" (p. 142).

(g) The unusual reference in the Koran 6. 38 to the community of animals may reflect the Mazdean belief that every community of animals and things has its own *ratu* (master or leader).¹⁵¹ A similar notion occurs in the Book of Enoch (see Slavic Book of Enoch, chap. 58, and cf. *Vespered* I. 1; *Yasna* 13. 1; *Videvdād* 13).

Other Koranic concepts associated by Bausani with an Iranian background or origin include (h) the number of the daily prayers; (i) eschatological descriptions and details such as the scales in which people's deeds are weighed; (j) *hūrīs*, or heavenly maidens who keep company with the righteous (cf. *Zarātusht Nāma*, ed. F. Rosenberg, p. 57, and "the eighty maiden angels" who, according to a Sogdian Manichaean text, come to meet deceased pious persons and comfort them – an amplification of Mazdean *daēna*; see Henning, *BSOAS*, 11 [1943–46], p. 476); (k) the leveling of the mountains at the end of the world (see Messina in *Orientalia* [1935], p. 278, for the relevant passage in the *Bundahishn*); (l) the earth ejecting its hidden treasures (cf. Koran 99. 9 and *Zarātusht Nāma*, v. 1399); and (m) "fathers being

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Shaked, "Iranian Themes," p. 145, who confirms the likelihood of the borrowing (color in the sense of mode, style, spiritual shape of God).

¹⁵⁰ The Middle Persian word is *spra(h)m*, Parth. *sprahmag*, New Persian *siparham*, *siparyam*, "a fragrant herb, flower, sweet basil"; cf. Buddhist Sogdian *ṣprym'k*, "flower", Talmudic loanword *ṣprmg*. See H. S. Nyberg, *Manual*, II, p. 178, s.v. *spram*, with references, and Bailey, *Khotanese Dictionary*, p. 473, s.v. *kaṣpalgy*, for etymology and cognates. Most translators of the Koran render *rauh* wa *raiḥān* somewhat freely, e.g., "repose and rest" (Arberry), "breath of life and plenty" (Pickthall), "rest and satisfaction" (Yusuf Ali, explaining *raiḥān* in a footnote as "sweet-smelling plants"), "an evening breeze and fragrance" (Bell), "rest and fragrance" (Palmer). ¹⁵¹ See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.*, cols. 1498–50 for the passages.

separated from their sons" (Messina, pp. 273–74) – all elements of the vivid fantasy that Iranians developed for the final *frashikart*.

These notions were probably passed on to Islam, Bausani maintained, through two channels: one, post-exilic Jewish sources such as Midrashic texts, which absorbed much of Iranian ideas; and the other, Gnostic-Manichaean sects of the Arab *limes*. The *tiṭhe* (*zakāt*), fasting, and canonical prayers, which are among the "pillars" of Islam, are to be found in very similar forms in Manichaeism. Canonical prayers were preceded in this faith, as in Islam, by ablu-tion, and if water was not available, with sand,¹⁵² and were composed of prostrations and stations very similar to those found in typical Islamic *rak'a*.

Manichaean influence appears to have had wider dimensions, he continues. Apart from "heavenly maidens" (*hūrīs*), one of the most important dogmas of the Koran, that is, the successive divine revelations through the sequence of the prophets, is akin to the doctrine declared by Mani, as is Muhammad's declaration of his being the "seal of the prophet" ("khātam al-nabiyyīn," Koran 33. 40), to Mani's claim (but see J. W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology* [1945], I/1, pp. 14–25, who does not see the necessity of any source as precedent for these doctrines other than the Bible). The Koran 5. 73, 116 mentions a singular trinity consisting of God the Father, Mary, and Jesus, which cannot be traced to any Christian sect, but seems to have had a background among the Manichaeans, for they identified the (female) Holy Spirit with their Mother of Living, although a Semitic precedent cannot be excluded.

Bausani, like Widengren, maintains that it is generally through late Jewish syncretistic legends, Midrashic literature, and Christian apocrypha, all strongly Gnostically oriented, that Iranian concepts reached Arabia (pp. 143–44). Thus diffused, Iranian elements are naturally to be found, Bausani points out, far more abundantly in the vast body of the *hadīth*. Among the instances are the prohibition against wearing silk garments, which has a counterpart in *Mēnōk ī xrat* 16. 64–66 (on account of silk being a product of worms, considered Ahrimanic creatures by Zoroastrians); disapproval of urinating while standing up (2. 39); and the torment that the angels inflict on the dead in their tombs (*udhāb al-qabr*), which has its origin in the *si dōsh* or the three nights' torment of the Zoroastrian texts. He, too, saw a distant Iranian influence in the development in the *hadīth* of the legend of the Prophet's ascension from, in his view,

¹⁵² Cf. Islamic *tayammum*.

the slight and purely symbolic-visionary Koranic passages 17. 1; 52. 1-18 and reflected in *mi'rāj* literature. *The Book of Ardā Virāz* presents, he continues, an Iranian instance of the legend "which reached Islam . . . and from there, almost certainly by way of Muslim legendary sources, to Dante" (p. 145, there are a few other examples on the same page).

Following the footsteps of Widengren closely in his general approach, Bausani concludes that two facts are clear: first, the debt of rising Islam to other traditions cannot be attributed simply to Christianity and Judaism, but must be attributed to particular forms of Christianity and Judaism that were deeply imbued with Near Eastern Gnostic-Syncretistic material, of which Iranian and Manichaean notions formed the basic elements; second, the Koran itself contains a great deal of material which still carries the symbolic flavor of gnosis and reveals a far wider knowledge of the earlier Middle Eastern religions than we are apt to believe. The study of Iranian terms in the Koranic vocabulary leads to the same conclusions. They were never directly derived from any Iranian language but through the mediation of Aramaic-Syriac and Hebrew (pp. 146-47).

Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin in his *La Religion de l'Iran ancien* (1962) adds, as he himself points out, two correspondences to Bausani's catalogue: the Mazdean belief in the soul's "meeting with the maiden," the personification of its deeds, which is similar to an idea in Islam (although according to most commentators of the Koran the figure is a male one); and the bridge of individual eschatology (Av. *činvatō perətu*), transposed in Islam to the final judgment at the end of time as *al-sirāt*.¹⁵³ In a later contribution, "Cor de Yima et trompette d'Išrāfīl: de la cosmogonie mazdéenne à l'eschatologie musulmane" (1979), he adds yet another case of transposition: Yima (Jamshēd), the shepherd king of Iranian myths, summons the seeds of future men to the shelter (*vara*) that he has built for good creatures against the predicted deadly storm by his blowing a horn (*sufrā*).¹⁵⁴ The myth lies, Duchesne-Guillemin argues, at the origin of the Islamic belief that resurrection will be announced by Išrāfīl blowing into his trumpet (*šūr*). *Šūr* occurs ten times in the Koran and has no

¹⁵³ For Islamic sources, which Duchesne-Guillemin quotes from Arthur Jeffrey, see *La Religion*, p. 359, n. 3, and 360, nn. 1 and 2.

¹⁵⁴ The meaning of Avestan *sufrā*, which occurs in *Vidēvdāt* 2. 30 and 38, had not been settled before Shahrām Hedāyati, Mehrdād Bahār, and Ahmad Tafazzoli recently ascertained the meaning independently; see Duchesne-Guillemin, "Cor de Yima," p. 541, nn. 3, 4, and 6 for bibliographical detail. Cf. also Middle Persian *srū*, Pers. *surū(n)*, *surūy* "antler, horn."

certain Arabic derivation;¹⁵⁵ *sufrā*- (seen also in Pers. *sūr-nāy*, *surūnā*) provides, as Duchesne-Guillemin convincingly argues, an origin for it both formally and semantically.

Duchesne-Guillemin is less sanguine, however, about the Iranian basis of Gnosticism than Widengren and Bausani are,¹⁵⁶ and R. C. Zaehner, a serious student of Zoroastrianism, finds the Gnostic belief in the management of the world by an evil deity incompatible with Zoroastrianism.¹⁵⁷ Widengren, however, argues in *Die Religionen Irans* (p. 356) that the conception of the world in Iran is colored by either pessimism or optimism, depending on whether the emphasis is placed on the interim victory of evil, or on the final victory of good. Gnostic doctrine proceeds from the first, and owes to Iran not only its essential ideas, but also its particular language.

In a series of admirable articles on the passage of ideas and traditions from Sassanian Iran to Islam,¹⁵⁸ Shaul Shaked has traced a further number of Iranian concepts and expressions in Arabic literature to their Iranian origins and has elaborated and honed some others mentioned by earlier scholars.

In "From Iran to Islam: Notes on some Themes in Transmission" (1984), he devoted part of his discussion to Ibn al-Muqaffa', "one of the most prominent and generally recognized bearers of Iranian literary tradition in Islam," who "had an avowed interest in transferring to Islam what he deemed to be of most interest in his native culture" (p. 32). This he did by translating a number of Middle Persian works, among them the lost *Khwadāy-nāmag*, a precursor of the *Shāh-nāma*, and *Kallīla wa Dimna*, a collection of fables of Indian origin. He also wrote a number of treatises of his own, some of which have created the impression of originality, whereas, according to Shaked, upon closer look "one sometimes notices unacknowledged indebtedness to Sassanian sources" (p. 32). One such case is his *al-Adab al-saghir*, a large part of which is found also in Miskawayh's *Jāwīdān Xrad* (*al-Hikma al-khālida*) in the section devoted to the wisdom of the Persians (p. 32, n. 4). Shaked's focus of attention, however, is the important

¹⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 547 for the argument against trusting the occurrence of *šūr* in an allegedly pre-Islamic Arabic poem.

¹⁵⁶ For a brief survey of the controversy over the origin of Gnosticism see Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion*, pp. 267ff.

¹⁵⁷ Hans Jonas, however, an outstanding scholar of Gnosticism, considers the Iranian element one of several Eastern ones that contributed to the genesis of Gnosticism; see his *The Gnostic Religion*, pp. 15ff., particularly pp. 33-34, and 208. See also his autobiographical paper "A Retrospective View" (1977), pp. 1-15.

¹⁵⁸ The articles are now republished in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, a Variorum Collected Studies, and numbered VI to XII with original page numbers.

political treatise *Kitāb al-ṣaḥāba* that Ibn al-Muqaffa' addressed to al-Manṣūr, the second Abbasid caliph,¹⁵⁹ with bold and remarkably interesting advice on government policy and exercise of power in military, judicial, and fiscal matters, which S. D. Goitein deservedly considered as constituting "a turning point in the history of the Muslim state", but unlike Goitein, who assumed originality for Ibn al-Muqaffa's ideas and proposals, Shaked concludes that it owed much to Sassanian tradition. For instance, the following phrase in the words of praise that Ibn al-Muqaffa' addressed to the caliph, "Truly the commander of the Faithful . . . combines with his knowledge questioning and listening" ("fa-inna amīr al-mu'minīna . . . yajma'u ma'a 'ilmīhi al-mas'alata wa'l-istimā'a," *Ṣaḥāba*, p. 117), seems to echo the notion of *hampursagih* or consulting with wise people, one of the prominent virtues in Sassanian moral literature, the two terms *al-mas'ala* and *al-istimā'* being perfect renderings of the Middle Persian terms in *Dēnkart* VI,¹⁶⁰ *hampursagih* and *niyōšdārīh* (Shaked, p. 35 and n. 8).

Among other parallel terms are the well-known Zoroastrian three forms of human activity, that is, thought, speech, and action: *minišn*, *govišn*, and *kunišn* in Middle Persian, rendered as *al-ra'y*, *al-qawl*, and *al-sira* (*Ṣaḥāba*, p. 120) in the same order that they are found in Iranian works; and the terms *dēn* and *xrat*, which obviously underlie Ibn al-Muqaffa's *al-dīn* and *al-'aql*, Religion and Intelligence (even though the original meaning of *dēn* in Middle Persian, "the sum of man's spiritual attributes, conscience, religion," was not quite the same as that of Arabic *dīn*, "religion," with which it coalesced).

Among the prominent Sassanian notions is the interdependence of government and religion, expressed in various ways and most clearly in the *ʿAhd Ardašīr* or the Testament of Ardašīr and advocated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' in *al-Ṣaḥāba*, and maintained to this day by the Shi'ites (Shaked, p. 37).

In the article "From Iran to Islam: On Some Symbols of Royalty" (1986), Shaked discussed some symbols of power or items of luxury adopted from Sassanian Persia: cushions (*namāriq* and *wasā'id* in Arabic), throne (*sarīr*), stool (*kursī*), quince as one of the presents that were offered to Sassanian kings, and finally the four seals attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, each of which represented a different aspect of the king's sovereign power, "borrowed undoubtedly from the Sassanian tradition" (p. 86).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ For a description and evaluation of this treatise see F. Gabrieli in *EF*, III, p. 884b and S. D. Goitein, "A Turning Point," pp. 150ff. ¹⁶⁰ E 45c in Shaked's edition.

¹⁶¹ On literary evidence for Sassanian seals see A. D. H. Bivar, *Western Asiatic Seals*, II, pp. 29–34.

In "*Paymān*: An Iranian Idea in Contact with Greek Thought and Islam" (1987), Shaked explored the notion of "the right measure" or *paymān*, the most basic tenet of Zoroastrian ethics, one that according to a passage in the *Dēnkart* IV (ed. Madan, p. 429, tr. Shaked, p. 226) distinguishes Iran most perfectly from all other peoples and cultures. It corresponds to the Aristotelian notion of the mean and may have been influenced by it (p. 226). It is rendered in Arabic by *i'tidāl*, *qaṣd*, *iqtisād*. Although the idea of the mean may have entered Arabic literature not necessarily from Middle Persian but from Greek sources, some instances show derivation from Iran (pp. 229ff.; summary, pp. 231–32).

In yet another article, "A Facetious Recipe and the Two Wisdoms" (1987), Shaked traces a metaphorical recipe, in a somewhat jocular style, of the mystical *lawzīnāj* or *fālūdaj* attributed to the famous Sufi Dhū'l-Nūn, as well as some other such recipes or prescriptions, to their Sassanian model (pp. 25–29). Further, he finds the origin of the two kinds of Wisdom seen in the sayings discussed by, among others, Ghazālī, that is, innate wisdom (*'aql al-maṭbū'* or *'aql al-gharīzī*) and acquired wisdom (*'aql al-masmū'* or *muta'allam*), in a similar division central to the religious thought of Sassanian Iran but going back to Avesta (Middle Persian *āsn xrad* and *gōšōsrūd xrad*, Avestan *āсна xratu-* and *gaošō-srūta xratu-* respectively, p. 32). In Arabic literature "it has gained the ultimate stamp of approval by being attributed to 'Alī" (p. 33).

Of the many ideas, precepts, and sayings that passed from Sassanian Iran to Islam, the notion that whoever performs a good or evil deed does it to himself is an instance that Shaked documents in his article "For the Sake of the Soul: A Zoroastrian Idea in Transmissions into Islam" (1990). He explores the ramifications of the Zoroastrian phrase *pad ruwān ī xvēš rāy*, "for the sake of one's soul," and their reflection in Islamic literature,¹⁶² and this leads him to discuss briefly the origin of Islamic *waqf*, which parallels Sassanian endowments for one's own soul or someone else's (*pad ruwān*, *ruwān rāy* in Middle Persian), so common a feature of Zoroastrian piety (pp. 23).¹⁶³

He points out other reflections of Sassanian ideas in Arabic literature, such as the equation of anger with a devil in the words of Abū

¹⁶² See nn. 20–22 in the article for references.

¹⁶³ The origin of Islamic *waqf* has been discussed by other scholars as well, among them C. Cahen, "Quelques réflexions sur le waqf ancien," pp. 38–40; and A. Perikhanian, "Problema proisxoždenija vakfa" (1973), pp. 3–25 (see Shaked, p. 23, nn. 21–22 for details of publication). For Zoroastrian pious foundations see M. Boyce, "The Pious Foundations of the Zoroastrians," see also Perikhanian in *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, III/2, pp. 664f.

Muslim to Šahrām al-Marwazī, which translates the Zoroastrian idea that regarded *xešm* or Wrath as a chief demon (pp. 150f.).

I have already mentioned some of the content of this article, where it amplifies or refines points made by other scholars on the borrowing of Iranian elements into Islam. As to the adaptation of eschatological elements, mentioned by many scholars, Shaked observes:

One fairly large topic on which there is quite clear evidence of close affinity between Iranian and Islamic ideas so as to suggest probable dependence is eschatology. Islamic eschatology derived a good deal of material from Jewish and Christian sources, which in their turn were also dependent, it seems, on Iranian antecedents. But there are elements in the Islamic treatment of eschatological events that derive quite clearly from Iran. (p. 144)

and further "The flow of ideas from Iran to Islam is such, however, that Iran may be regarded as a natural source to comparable Islamic ideas unless there is good reason to suppose differently" (p. 145).

Shaked notes among negative reactions of Islam to Iranian traditions the following prohibitions: killing of frogs, a highly meritorious act in Zoroastrianism; staying in a house where Persian luxuries are in sight; the celebration of Persian festivals; and praying in Persian manners. "Umar, for example, is reported as saying: 'Beware of the mode of prayer of the Persians (*raṭānat al-a'ajim*)' (Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā'* 199f., where other sayings in a similar vein are to be found concerning the celebration of Naurūz and Mihrajān. Those who celebrate them will find themselves on the day of Resurrection in company with the impious") (p. 149, n. 34).

Among the Persian influences he points to the prohibition against urinating while standing and against walking with one shoe (in Middle Persian *ēw-mōg dwārīšn*, "running around with one shoe"), a curious but emphatic injunction in both traditions (pp. 151f., with references). The varying attitude toward the Persian language is reflected in the *ḥadīth* ("Iranian Themes," p. 149). For instance, "When God is angry, He reveals His message in Arabic; when He is pleased, He reveals it in Persian"; and the opposite: "Persian is the language most hateful to God" (reference is made to Dhahabī, *Aḥādīth mukhtāra*, p. 23, no. 1 and p. 24, no. 2).¹⁶⁴ Some Shi'ite tenets, like concealing one's faith in the face of danger (*taqiyya*), seem to have Zoroastrian antecedents.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Shaked cites other similar *ḥadīths*.

¹⁶⁵ For a Zoroastrian text on the dissimulation of faith, see *Pahlavi revāyat*, 33b:1. (Shaked notes, "Iranian Themes," p. 150, n. 40, that the same phenomenon is found also among the Mandeans. He also refers to Goldziher's "Das Prinzip des *taqiyya* im Islam," *ZDMG*, 60 (1906), pp. 213–26, which, however, does not mention the Zoroastrian parallel.)

It should be noted that Shaked expresses reservations about Ph. Gignoux's hypothesis that *besmala* (*bismi'llāhi'l-raḥmāni'l-raḥīm*) was modeled on the Middle Persian *pad nām ī yazdān*, 'by the name of God' (Gignoux *et al.*, *Etudes épigraphiques*, pp. 159–63), pointing like Goldziher and Nöldeke to antecedent Jewish and Christian parallels, even though conceding that a similar formula was current also among both Zoroastrians and Manichaeans ("Iranian Themes," pp. 152–54).

One may add to the list that Shaked has compiled the *tawqī'* or brief written comment that Ibrāhīm Baihaqī cites from 'Abd-Allāh b. Tāhīr (r. 828–45): "man sa'a'ā ra'ā wa man lazama'l-manām ra'ā'l-aḥlām," which Kasrawī, according to Baihaqī, recognized as one of Anūsharwān's: "har ki rawadh charadh, har ki khuspadh khāf wīnadh" ("He who walks grazes, he who adheres to sleep sees dreams").¹⁶⁶

Instances of borrowing or influence from Persia is not confined to the above. As Shaked pointed out, "Iranian themes are so ubiquitous and so numerous in Arabic literature that it would take volumes to encompass the subject . . . The more one reads in the vast repository of Arabic literature the more one comes across further elements that may be regarded as reflecting or continuing older Iranian ideas" (p. 143).

An aspect of the Persian presence in the Islamic world was that the Persian palaces, fire-temples, towers, bridges, statues, sculptured scenes, and other monuments of Sassanian Persia and of earlier times were still standing and visible for centuries after the Islamic conquest¹⁶⁷ (and some are extant to this day); they served as a source of emulation and artistic inspiration. Buḥturī (d. 897) wrote an entire *qaṣīda* describing a palace of Chosroes I Anūsharwān and the figural paintings that adorned it.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ *Al-Maḥāsin wa'l-masāwī*, p. 310. The editor has *choradh* instead of *charadh*, the correct reading, as in Muḥammadi, *Farhang*, p. 275.

¹⁶⁷ See Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb*, pp. 272f. for a description of such monuments, particularly the abundant fire-temples in Fārs, and Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, pp. 116ff., where he says: "The fire-temples in Fārs are more than I can count or remember, as there is no city, rural district (*rastāq*), or region, but there is a large number of fire-temples in it" (p. 118); I am grateful to my colleague Manūchehr Kasheff for this reference.

¹⁶⁸ See also the reference given by Pellat, *EF*, I, p. 1290a. Ibn Khaldūn's observation about *Ḥwān* (*Alwān*) *Kisrā*, the same palace, is instructive: "One should see with one's own eyes the Reception Hall of Khosraw (*Ḥwān Kisrā*), that powerful achievement of Persian (architecture). Ar-Rashid intended to tear it down and destroy it. He could not do so for all his trouble. He began the work, but then was not able to continue. The story of how he asked Yahyā b. Khālid for advice in that affair is well known" (*The Muqaddimah*, I, tr. F. Rosenthal, p. 356).

Of the Sassanian products, silver coins continued in circulation long after the demise of the dynasty,¹⁶⁹ apart from being imitated and issued with some alterations by local Arab governors and some Umayyad caliphs¹⁷⁰ in what are known as Arab-Sassanian coins. Although 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān's monetary reform of 696-99 introduced purely epigraphic coins, Sassanian-type coins with or without figural representation continued to circulate in some provinces (notably Tabaristān) and to inspire monetary designs in central Asia and elsewhere.¹⁷¹

The inclusion of much Persian historical tradition, wisdom, literature, and illustrative tales and fables in the works of *adab* does not need elaboration. They achieved currency through early translations by Ibn al-Muqaffa' and others.¹⁷² Most of the original translations from Middle Persian, including that of the *Khwaddāy-nāmag* or 'Book of Lords,' a precursor of the *Shah-nāma*, have, however, been lost (one major exception being the *Kalīla wa Dimna*). In 1952, 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī published in Cairo a work of Miskawayh, *al-Hikma al-khālida* or *Jāwīdān khirad*, which W. B. Henning recognized as a somewhat free translation of a book containing a known Sassanian *andarz* collection and wise sayings.¹⁷³

From the foregoing brief survey two points clearly emerge: the first is that in spite of centuries of proximity, commercial relations, and periods of political control over parts of the Arabian peninsula, the

¹⁶⁹ Muslims interpreted the likeness of fire altars on Sassanian coins as fortresses; see Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, II, p. 55, n. 564.

¹⁷⁰ See G. Miles, in *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, IV, pp. 365ff. According to him, the Sassanian-type coin with kufic inscription and without figural representation was minted in the name of Mu'āwiya and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and at least 37 governors in more than 30 mints, p. 365.

¹⁷¹ For a description of the features of Sassanian coins and their widespread influence see R. Göbl in *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, III/1, pp. 324ff., particularly pp. 331ff.

¹⁷² Cf. Ibn Nadīm's remark, *Fihrist*, p. 363: "Thus saith Muḥammad ibn Ishāq [al-Nadīm]: The first people to collect stories, devoting books to them and safeguarding them in libraries, some of them being written as though animals were speaking, were the early Persians. Then the Ashkānian kings, the third dynasty of Persian monarchs, took notice of this [literature]. The Sāsānian kings in their time adding to it and extending it. The Arabs translated it into the Arabic language and then, when masters of literary style and eloquence became interested, they refined and elaborated it, composing what was similar to it in content. The first book to be written with this content was the book *Hazār Afsān*, which means 'a thousand stories'" tr. B. Dodge, p. 713. On *Hazār Afsān* see Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, par. 1416 and the thorough article "Alf layla wa laylah" by Pellat, in *Elr*, I, pp. 831-35.

¹⁷³ "Ein Arabische Version mittelpersischer Weisheitschriften," in W. B. Henning *Selected Papers* II, Acta Iranica, Deuxième Série, 15, Hommages et Opera Minora, vol. VI (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), pp. 479-83.

Persian cultural presence in the Hījāz at the time of the emergence of Islam is rather veiled and subtle; on the surface it hardly measures up to the expectation roused by historical circumstances. The second is that the Iranian presence is no less real for being latent and for being overshadowed by the obvious affinity of Islam with Judeo-Christian tradition. The paucity of Arab written records for pre-Islamic times and the total disappearance after the Arab conquest of Sassanian works make it hard to measure the extent of the Persian cultural presence, so that a careful detective search is needed to expose the facts of this presence. (See J. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation*, pp. 110ff.)

IV Iranian loanwords in Arabic

Among the major clues to Persian presence is the considerable number of Iranian words that entered into Arabic prior to Islam, some of which appear also in the Koran. It is an interesting fact, as Widengren observes and Eilers reiterates, that whereas pre-Islamic Iranian languages are all practically free from Semitic vocabulary, Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic have borrowed a remarkable number of words from Iranian¹⁷⁴ (as did late Babylonian, Achaemenid Elamite, Armenian, most Turkic languages, and later, Urdu).

The study of the foreign words of the Koran, including those of Iranian origin, has long been undertaken by both Muslim and Western scholars. The first to apply themselves to the task were the earliest commentators on the Koran,¹⁷⁵ but it cannot be said to have been yet completed. Of the Arab lexicographers, who undertook to distinguish foreign loans in Arabic, Abū Mansūr Jawālīqī (d. 540/1145) made a collection of some seven hundred words of

¹⁷⁴ "It is truly astonishing," writes G. Widengren, "that so few authors have paid attention to the fact that before the Muslim conquest there are almost no Semitic words to be found in Iranian languages, whereas the number of Iranian words in Hebrew, Aramaic (in general), and Syriac is really impressive," *Die Religionen Irans*, p. 357. W. Eilers similarly notes, "Every one knows that as a result of the Islamization of Iran, Persian is shot through, as far as the remotest recesses of its dialects, with Arabic loanwords. Much less known to us is the fact that Persia was for a long time before Islam, as a result of its political domination and cultural superiority, on the giving side of the neighbouring peoples with respect to language matters" ("Iranisches Lehngut im arabischen Lexikon," p. 203). For Iranian loanwords in Old Aramaic see J. C. Greenfield in *Elr*, II, pp. 256-59; for Iranian loanwords in Middle Aramaic see S. Shaked, *ibid.*, pp. 259-61, who provides a list of such words according to semantic categories.

¹⁷⁵ See Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, pp. 2-14 for a brief review of the treatment of the foreign words of the Koran by Muslim exegetes and lexicographers and the controversy over their existence.

non-Arab origin – mostly Persian – in his *al-Mu'arrab*,¹⁷⁶ and Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Khafājī (d. 1659) repeated the undertaking in his *Shifā' al-ghafl* by using *al-Mu'arrab* and other sources and adding more words of foreign origin.¹⁷⁷ Serious studies in the West of the foreign vocabulary in Arabic and in the Koran made considerable progress during the final decades of the 1800s, exemplified in S. Fraenkel's work on Aramaic loanwords in Arabic.¹⁷⁸ In 1908, Rev. Addi Sherr published in Beirut his study of Persian loans in Arabic in *al-ʿAlfāz al-fārisiyya al-mu'arraba*, listing over 1,600 words and names. His work, useful as it is, suffers somewhat from his lack of familiarity with Old and Middle Iranian, and also from too great a readiness to see an Iranian origin for borrowed Arabic words.

In 1919, A. Siddiqi's useful study of the Persian vocabulary in classical Arabic, *Studien über die persischen Fremdwörter im klassischen Arabisch*, was published in Göttingen, focusing on sound changes rather than furnishing a list of the loanwords. Arthur Jeffery, the noted scholar of Koranic studies, sought in his *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran* (1938) to provide an up-to-date listing of all such words together with philological discussions. He rightly remarked that "Little further advance can be made in our interpretation of the Qur'ān or the life of Muḥammad until an exhaustive study has been made of the vocabulary of the Qur'ān" (introduction). In his index of foreign words that are discussed in the book the Iranian ones are most numerous next to the Syriac-Aramaic and Hebrew group. But Jeffery himself gives credence to Widengren's criticism that "In this very useful book the treatment of Iranian loanwords is perhaps the least satisfactory section"¹⁷⁹ by admitting that "In the case of references to Iranian sources, however, the author, for lack of library facilities, has been compelled to limit himself to the few texts, now somewhat antiquated, which were available to him in Cairo" (p. vii). One of the works that was apparently not available to Jeffery was H. H. Schaefer's *Iranische Beiträge* (1930), which contains a chapter on Iranian elements in Imperial Aramaic (pp. 57–75).

¹⁷⁶ A critical edition of this useful book was published by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir in 1942 with a preface by 'Aḍb al-Wahhāb 'Azzām, in which he points out some of the methodological weaknesses of the work. A later edition by F. 'Abd al-Rahīm in 1990 adds some comparative material from Arabic sources.

¹⁷⁷ See also Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 178–85 on foreign vocabulary of the Koran. See Rāghib Isfahānī, *Mufradāt*, for a good list of references on the Koran and its vocabulary by its editor S. A. Dāwūdī, pp. 1213–28.

¹⁷⁸ *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden, 1886). He had earlier published *De vocabulis in antiquis Arabum carminibus et in Corano peregrinis* (Leiden, 1880). ¹⁷⁹ *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 138.

Additions and corrections have been made to the study of the Iranian vocabulary in Arabic since the publication of Jeffery's book, notably by Widengren in an appendix to his monograph cited earlier on the Prophet's ascension¹⁸⁰ (pp. 179–98). Among these are *barzakh*, "a barrier or partition" <barz+ax>, "high existence" (which he compares with *dūzakh*, "hell" <dūzax>, "evil existence"); *sundus*, "fine silk" <Parthian *sundus* (negating connection with Akkadian *sudinnul sadinnu*); *warda*, "rose," which, according to him, need not have gone through Aramaic into Arabic, as the early Middle Persian pronunciation was *varda* and not *varta*.¹⁸¹ Widengren also compiled a list of the Iranian loanwords in the Mandaean dialect of Aramaic.¹⁸²

Wilhelm Eilers, a versatile scholar in the field of Semitic-Iranian studies, made considerable contributions to this field in a number of publications, notably in two articles, "Das Iranische Lehngut im arabischen Lexikon. Über einige Berufsamen und Titel" (1962) and "Iranisches Lehngut im Arabischen" (1968).¹⁸³ I have already mentioned Duchesne-Guillemin's derivation of *sūr*, "trumpet," from Iranian (see above, p. 40).

The fullest compilation to date of Arabic borrowings from Iranian is by M. A. Īmām-Shūshtarī, who has brought together over 2,000 words in his lexicon of Persian words in Arabic¹⁸⁴ by culling them from a variety of texts and dictionaries, with citation of sources.¹⁸⁵ A. Tafazzoli's article in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, II, pp. 256–59, a brief account of Iranian loanwords in Arabic, discusses the sound changes,

¹⁸⁰ Widengren's remarks seek generally to refine Jeffery's philological discussions of both Semitic and Iranian words and determine more precisely the dialectal forms involved rather than adding new cases of borrowing.

¹⁸¹ This derivation of *wazīr*, "minister," from Iranian *višr* which Jeffery, p. 208, says was borrowed "doubtless direct from the Middle Persian," is now abandoned by most scholars, who consider it a *faʿīl* form of *wzr*, "to carry, to bear." See below, p. 71 and nn. 263, 264. ¹⁸² As an appendix to his *Kulturbegabung*, pp. 89–108.

¹⁸³ Of note are also his *Die vergleichende-semasiologische Methode in der Orientalistik*, (Mainz and Wiesbaden, 1974), *Sinn und Herkunft der Planetennamen* (Munich, 1976), *Geographische Namengebung in und um Iran, Iranische Ortsnamenstudien* (1987) and *Der Name Demawend* (a collection of several articles published originally in *Archiv Orientalni*, with additions and comprehensive indexes (1988)). See R. Schmitt in *Elr*, VIII, pp. 424–25 and *Bio-Bibliographies de 134 savants*, pp. 149–57, for his other works. ¹⁸⁴ *Farhang-i vāzhahā-yi fārsi dar 'arabi*.

¹⁸⁵ The Persian rendering of words can be trusted in this work – an advantage over Addi Sherr's compilation – but the author, primarily an Arabist, generally refrains from philological discussions on account of his admitted unfamiliarity with ancient Iranian or Semitic languages. Nonetheless his dictionary is very useful for citing references given for each loan, for including scientific terms, for clarifying the probable Khūzī origin of some loanwords (his being from Khūzīstān and familiar with the local patois), and for his restrained approach in assigning Persian origins to Arabic foreign words.

categorizes the loanwords into semantic fields, and provides a bibliography.

As to the nature of the Iranian words that entered Arabic in pre-Islamic or early Islamic times, Bosworth, from whose excellent survey of Arabo-Persian relations before Islam I have already quoted, remarks that "Persian words tended to be borrowed by the Arabs for objects and concepts which their own desert *'arabiyya*, despite its famed richness, lacked, viz. for cultural and, to a lesser extent, religious and ethical terms" ("Iran and the Arabs," p. 610). Thus we find, for example, in the poetry of A'sā, who, according to Ibn Qutaiba, was fond of using Persian words in his poetry, a number of words for musical instruments borrowed from Persian: *sanj* (Pers. *chang*), "lute," *nāy*, "flute," and *barbat*, "harp." Bosworth also mentions some of the other words borrowed from Persian (*ibid.*):

It is not surprising that it was from the Persians that the Arabs obtained words like *tāj* "crown" (MP *tāg*), already in the al-Namāra inscription of Mar' al-Qais and in several pre-Islamic and mukhaḍram poets, and *dir* "chain mail" (< **dirih* < OP *drāda*-; cf. also Avestan *zrāda*-, MP *zrēh*, NP *zirih*). In the Qur'ān we find some Persian words denoting theological or moral figures and concepts, such as *'ifrīt* "demon" (early MP *āfrītan*, later MP *āfrīdan* "to create," hence "creature"),¹⁸⁶ and *junāh* "crime" (< late MP and NP *gunāh* < earlier MP *wināh* "crime, sin"). But especially noteworthy are terms relating to Paradise and the delights there for the elect: *firdaus* "Paradise" itself (< Avestan *pairidaēza*, passing into Greek and most Middle Eastern languages, and probably via the Christians of Iraq into Arabic); *istabraq* "silk brocade" (MP *stabrag* < *stabr* "thick, strong"), worn by the dwellers in Paradise; *namāriq* "cushions" (Parthian *namr*, MP and NP *narm* "soft"), on which the saved will loll; and *rauda* "well-watered meadow or garden," as in Paradise (perhaps < MP *rōd* "river," and hence from the Iraqi milieu). Clearly, when Muḥammad wished to impress his followers by describing the joys in store for the righteous – and perhaps to counter the influence of his rival in Mecca, al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, who told stories of the Persian heroes Rustam and Isfandiyyār and distracted the Prophet's audience – he not infrequently had recourse to Persian terms, for the splendours and luxury of Persian court life were proverbial in early Arabia.

Arabic loans from Iranian did not all come from Middle or New Persian, however; they also came from other languages, notably

¹⁸⁶ This is also what Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, p. 215, says on the authority of Horn, *Etymologie*, §39 and Vullers, *Lexicon*, I, but the phonological and semantic difficulties and the absence of the word in an intermediary language make the hypothesis unlikely.

Parthian, as expected, and even from Old Persian or Median.¹⁸⁷ In their complicated passage to Arabic, often through Aramaic or Syriac, and as they were being adapted to the sound system and morphology of Arabic, they went through many changes so that it is sometimes difficult to recognize them as Iranian. A few examples will illustrate the above points:¹⁸⁸

abābīl (Koran 105. 3), pl. of *ābila*, "vesicle, smallpox" (but not *abīlat* as in Jeffery): see Jeffery, pp. 43f. for the controversy over this word;¹⁸⁹ *ayāraj*, "a purgative" (MPers. *ayārag*, "helper"); *bāl*, "spade" (MPers. *bēl*; Harzandī *bol*; NPers. *bīl*); *banafshaj*, "violet" (MPers. *wanaḥṣag*, NPers. *banḥṣa*); *barzakh*, Koran 23. 102, 25. 55, 55. 20, "a barrier or partition" (MPers. **barzax*-, "elevated existence"; see Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, pp. 179–85); *baydaq*, pl. *bayādiq*, "pawn in chess" (MPers. *payādag*); *bustān*, "garden" (MPers. *bōstān*); *dānaq*, pl. *dawānīq*, "one-sixth of a drachm" (MPers. *dānaq*, NPers. *dāng*); *dāshin* "gift," pl. *dawāshin* (Aram. *dšn*-, OPers. **dāšna*-); *dast*, "plain" (MPers. and NPers. *dašt*); *daydab*, *daydhabān*, pl. ~ *āt*, *dayādiba*, "guard, sentry" (MPers. *diḍbān*); *diḍāj*, "silk brocade" (MPers. *dēbāg*, NPers. *ḍibā*); *dihlīz*, "vestibule" (MPers. *dahlīz*); *diwān*, "administration or its departments, account book of the treasury, chancellery, collected poems of a single poet," pl. *dawāwīn* (M and NPers. *diwān*); *dukāh*, *sikāh*, *jārkāh* (names of musical modes; NPers. *dugāh*, *sigāh*, *čārgāh*); *dustūr*, "rule, minister" (MPers. *dastwar*, NPers. *dastūr*); *fadan*, "palace," from the assumed pl. *afdān* (Syriac *'pdn*-, OPers. *apadāna*-); *farmān*, pl. *farāmīn*, "decree, order" (MPers. *framān*, NPers. *farmān*); *farsakh*, "parasang, four Roman miles" (MPers. *frasang*); *farzān*, "queen in chess" (MPers. *frazēn*); *fālūdaj*, "a sweet made of flour and honey," *fālūdaji*, "soft and flabby like *fālūdaj*" (MPers. *pālūdaj*); *fayj*, "courier, messenger" (MPers. *payg*, NPers. *peyk*); *fihriṣṭ* (fihrist, pl. *fahāris*, "register, synopsis, index" (MPers. **pahrist*); *firjāl*/firkār, "pair of compasses" (NPers. *pargār*); *fišfāraj*, "sweetmeat" (MPers. *pēspārag*); *fišfis*, "clover, lucerne" (M and NPers. *aspart*); *fitkar*, "idol" (Aram. *pītkr*, "relief, sculpture," OPers. *patikara*-); *furānaq*, "army, leader" (MPers. *parwānag*); *fustuql*/fustaq, "pistachio" (MPers. *pistag*); *hubb* "earthen

¹⁸⁷ The identification of the Iranian dialect from which a word was borrowed into Arabic is still far from satisfactory. Addi Sherr points to some possible Kurdish origins, and Imām-Shūshtari draws attention to some Khūzī provenance (see n. 185).

¹⁸⁸ OPers. = Old Persian, Parth. = Parthian, MPers. = Middle Persian, NPers. = New Persian, Aram. = Aramaic, Syr. = Syriac, Arm. = Armenian.

¹⁸⁹ Some Persian enthusiasts have suggested Pers. *ābila murghān*, "chicken pox," to be understood by *ayr* = *abābīl*.

vessel" (MPers. *xunb*); *ibrīq*, "water jug" (MPers. **ābrēg*; see Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 178); *jahbadh*, "moneychanger" (MPers. **gēhbad*, OPers. **gaiθāpati-*; see Eilers, "Iranisches Lehngut im arabischen Lexicon," p. 211); *jāmūs*, pl. *jawānīs*, "buffalo" (MPers. *gāwmēš*); *jašš*, "gypsum" (M and NPers. *gač*); *jawhar*, "substance, jewel" (MPers. *gōhr*); *jawz*, "walnut" (MPers. *gōz*); *jawzīnāql*, "walnut sweetmeat" (MPers. *gōzēnag*); *jazar*, "carrot" (NPers. *gazar*); *ju'dhar*, "calf" (MPers. *gōdar*); *jull*, "rose, flower" (MPers. *gul*, see also *ward*); *-jūn*, "color" (Parth. *-gōn*, cf. NPers. *-yōn*); e.g. *samanjūn*, "sky blue, azure," cf. Parth. *zar-gōnag*, "golden"; *junbadh* and *gubba*, "vault, dome, cupola" (M and NPers. *gunbad*); *jund*, pl. *junūd*, *ajnād*, "army" (also *jundiyya*, "military service," MPers. *tajnūd*, "enlistment," *tajannud*, "performing military service," MPers. *gund*); *jundlqund*, "testicle" (MPers. *gund*); *jurbuzlqurbuz*, "sly, cunning" (NPers. *gurbuz*); *kandaq*, "ditch, moat" (MPers. **kandag*);¹⁹⁰ *kanz*, "treasure" (Aram. *gnz*, OPers. **ganza-*);¹⁹¹ *khiwānīkhuwān*, "tray, table" (MPers. *xwān*); *khurdīg*, "a kind of broth" (MPers. *xwardīg* "food"); *Kisrā*, "the name of several Sassanian kings" (Syriac. *Kwsrw*, MPers. *Xusrav*); *korbaql qorbajl kulbaj*, *julfaq*, "shop, tavern" (MPers. *kurbag*, NPers. *kulba*, "hut"); *kushtubān*, "thimble" (MPers. *anguštān*); *majūs*, "the magi, Zoroastrians" (OPers. *maguš*, via Syr. *mgwš*, Parth. *mug*, cf. MPers. *muw*); *mahrajān/mihrajān*, "festival, celebration" (Parth. and MPers. **mihtaragān*, "the autumn festival of Mithra"); *marj*, "meadow" (Parth. *marj*; cf. MPers. *marv*); *marzubān*, "margrave" (MPers. and NPers. *marzbān*); *mawzaj*, "shoe" (MPers. *mōzag*); *māristān*, "hospital" (MPers. *wemāristān*, NPers. *bīmāristān*); *misk*, "musk" (MPers. and NPers. *mušk*); *miswāk*, *siwāk*, "tooth-brush" (MPers. **sawāk* from *sūdan*, "to rub, scrape"; see Eilers, "Lehngut," p. 590; Shaked, "Iranian Themes," p. 149, n. 35; *mūg*, "shoe" (MPers. *mōg*, cf. NPers. *mūza*); *mustaq*, "bagpipe" (MPers. **mustag*); *nāmaj/nāmaq*, "letter, writing" (MPers. *nāmag*); *namraq/numruq*, pl. *namāriq*, "cushion" (Parth. *namr* "meek," MPers. *namr* "soft"); *nawshādīr/nūshādīr*, "sal ammoniac" (NPers. *nišādūr*); *nebr*, "warehouse" from the assumed pl. *anbār* (= MPers. and NPers. "store, warehouse"); *qabā*, "outer garment" (MPers. *kabāg*); *qabj*, "partridge" (MPers. *kabk*); *qafiz*, "a measure" (MPers. *kafiz*); *qafsh*, "shoe" (MPers. *kafš*); *qashnīz*,

¹⁹⁰ According to Morony, *Iraq*, p. 153, it appears that it originally designated a series of trenches dug to protect the boundary between Hira and the Arabian najd; it was also the name given to the ditch dug by Muḥammad, reportedly on the advice of Saḥmān al-Fārisiy (Saḥmān the Persian) to protect Medina against the Meccan besiegers. ¹⁹¹ See Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, pp. 192-93.

"coriander" (MPers. *gišnīz*); *qayrawān*, "caravan" (MPers. *kārvān*); *qazz*, "silk" (MPers. and NPers. *kaz*); *rašās*, "lead, tin" (Parth. **arēč*, cf. Arm. *arēč*, MPers. *arzīz*, and see Tafazzoli, p. 232a.); *rawšan*, "window" (MPers. *rōšn* "light," NPers. *rowšan*); *rizq*, "livelihood, bounty," *razaqa*, "to provide for, to provide nourishment" (from MPers. *rōzīg* through Syriac; see Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, pp. 142-43); *rukh*, "rook in chess" (MPers. *rux*); *rustāq/rusdāq/ruzdāq*, "district, village" (MPers. *rōstāg*, NPers. *rūstā*); *shāhānāj*, "hemp seed" (MPers. *šāhdānag*); *sharjī*, "cistern" (MPers. **čāhrēg*; cf. Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 178 under *ibrīq*); *shājīrd*, "apprentice" (MPers. *hašāgīrd*, NPers. *šāgīrd*); *samanjūn*, "sky blue" (NPers. *āsmāngūn*); *saqr*, "falcon, hawk" (MPers. *čark*, NPers. *čarx*, *čary*); *sard*, "cold" (MPers. and NPers. *sard*); *šarm*, "hide, leather" (MPers. and NPers. *čarm*); *sarmūja*, also *jurmūg*, "boot" (MPers. **čarm-mūg*, "leather shoe"); *šārjīlshārūg*, "mortar" (MPers. *čārūg*); *shawbaq*, pl. *shawābiq*, *shawbak*, pl. *šawābīk*, "rolling pin" (MPers. *cōbag*, "wand"); *šašš*, "fish-hook" (NPers. *šast*); *šaṭranj* "chess" (MPers. *čatranj*); *shawdhar*, "veil" (MPers. *čadar*); *širās*, "glue" (MPers. **srēš*, NPers. *sirīš*); *sijjīl*, "lump of baked clay" (Koran, 11. 84; 15. 74; 105. 4; MPers. *sag*, "stone" + *gil*, "clay");¹⁹² *sikbājsakbāj*, "meat stew with vinegar" (MPers. **sikbāg*); *sikrīj*, "cistern" (MPers. **čāhrēg*); *sirāj*, "lamp" (Parthian *čarāg*, Aram. *šrg*); *siraj*, "sesame oil" (MPers. *širag*); *sirbāl*, *sirwāl*, "garment, coat of mail" (Syr. *šrb'l*, NPers. *šālvār*, "trousers");¹⁹³ *sirjīn*, "dung" (MPers. *sargēn*); *surādiq*, "tent, canopy, pavilion" (MPers. *srādag*, "hall," cf. Mandean *srđ'q*);¹⁹⁴ *tābaq*, "frying pan" (MPers. *tābag*); *tabar*, "axe" (MPers. *tabar*); *tadrujl/tadhruj*, "pheasant" (Parth. **tadarg*; cf. MPers. *tadar(v)*, NPers. *tadhav*); *tāj*, pl. *tījān*, "crown" (Parth. **tāg*, cf. Arm. *t'ag*, Syr. and Mandean *t'g*); *tambūr*, "cither, pandora" (MPers. *tanbūr*); *tastltašš*, "bowl" (MPers. and NPers. *tašt*); *tayhūj*, "partridge" (MPers. *tēhōg*); *tūt*, "mulberry" (NPers. *tūt*); *wann*, "lute" (MPers. *vīn*); *wisāda*, pl. *wasād'id* (Syr.

¹⁹² See Ibn Qutaiba, *Adab al-kātib*, p. 527; Jawāliqī, *al-Mu'arrab*, p. 81; and Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, p. 164, who gives further references.

¹⁹³ *Sirbāl* is used in pre-Islamic poetry in the sense of "shirt" or "shirt of mail" (see Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, p. 168 for references); in the Koran 14. 51 and 16. 83 in the sense of "garment"; in Aramaic *srbl'* means "mantle" (Jeffery, p. 168). In later Arabic the pl. *sarāwīl* is used with the meaning of "breeches, trousers" (Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs," p. 611), which conforms to the meaning of *šālvār* in NPers. It is an old loan, but need not be through Aramaic or Syriac.

¹⁹⁴ See Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*, p. 167 for bibliography, and Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 189.

bsadhya < OPers. **upa-sāta*-; see Shaked, "Some Symbols of Royalty," p. 77); *zāj*, "alum" (NPers. *zāy*, *zāf*); *zarjūn*, "reddish wine" (MPers. *zargōn*, "golden"); *zarnīkh*, "orpiment, realgar" (Aram. *zrnyk* < Median **zaranyaka*-; cf. OPers. *daranya*-, "gold"; see Tafazzoli, p. 233a); *zarqūn*, "zircon" (MPers. *zargōn*, "golden"); *zīj*, "astronomical table" (MPers. *zīg*); *zanjābil*, "ginger" (MPers. *singīšfir*);¹⁹⁵ *zīqlj*, "builder's string" (MPers. *zīg*).

Some verbs: *dawwana*, "to record, to register" (from *dīwān*, see above); *dashana*, "to give," from *dāshin*, "gift" (see above); *mahhara*, "to seal," from *mohr*, "seal" (= MPers.); *namaqa*, "to write a book" (from *nāmaq*, see above); *tāja*, "to be crowned" (from *tāj*, "crown," see above); *zaraqqa*, "to be blue," *azraq* "blue" (from *zarqūn*, see above).¹⁹⁶

The widely accepted view of the Persian presence in the Islamic world

With the conquest, the Arabs became more closely acquainted with Persian culture and way of life. As shown earlier, the Arabs were not unfamiliar with the Persians prior to Islam, but the host of captives taken in the course of Arab victories flooded not only Arab camps, but more particularly Medina, from which war booty was to be divided. Dīnawarī reports that the Arabs took so much booty at the battle of Jilawlā' as never before, including many daughters of Persian nobility (*ahrār*). It is said that the caliph 'Umar used to say "I take refuge with God from the daughters of Jilawlā'," and indeed they took part in the battle of Šiffin (i.e., they caused civil war among the Arabs).¹⁹⁷ The report is no doubt spurious, but points to the concern among the Arabs caused by the impact of numerous Persian captives.

The Arabs who conquered Persian cities, particularly al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon-Seleucia), were faced with a sophisticated system of administration and revenue collection about which they had little or no experience. To administer conquered territories they had to resort to Persian expertise.¹⁹⁸ While eliminating the top echelon of Sassanian administration, they retained the *dehqāns* or the landed gentry to help them to govern and to manage fiscal matters. Ibn Tīqtaqā reports that in the fifteenth year of his caliphate 'Umar saw that the victories had

increased and that loads of gold, silver, precious jewels, and magnificent garments kept arriving.¹⁹⁹ He thought the time had come to ease the life of the Muslims and divide the booty among them, but did not know how. Then one of the Persian governors (*marāziba*) present told him about the Persian practice of *dīwān*, where all income and expenditure, as well as recipients of gifts (*aiā*) were registered. 'Umar took to the idea,²⁰⁰ and the germ of *dīwān* or the system of government departments took root. The system consequently became a major aspect of Muslim administration for many centuries. With the increasing Islamization of the Persians and their entry into *wilā'* or clientage relationships with the Arabs, greater knowledge of Persian culture, its history, and its statecraft became available to the Muslims. Borrowings from Persia also increased. Under the Umayyads, many Sassanian administrative measures, as well as cultural traits and artistic motifs, were adopted. As I. Lapidus points out,

The parallels between the measures taken by 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd and the practices of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires are striking. In Syria and Egypt the whole administration apparatus including revenue administration, and even the form of chancery documents was Byzantine in origin . . . In Iraq the Sassanian pattern of administrative organization, the fourfold division of finance, military, correspondence, and chancellery services, was adopted by Arab administrators. (*Islamic Societies*, p. 62)

And as he notes further:

Within the court milieu there were literary and cultural alternatives to Islam and Arabism. In keeping with the recruitment of the late Umayyad and 'Abbasid political elites from all parts of the empire, Persian influences made themselves felt in Umayyad times. In the region of Caliph Hisham (724-43) Persian court procedures were adopted, and the first translations of Persian political documents were made. (*ibid*)

¹⁹⁹ A measure of the amount of booty that the notables among the Prophet's Companions had collected in the course of Islamic conquests may be taken from Mas'ūdī's report (*Murūj*, pars. 1578-82) of the possessions that 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, Zubair b. 'Awwām, Talha, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Awf, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās, Miqdād, Zaid b. Thābit, and Ya'lā b. Munya had accumulated. Zubair, for instance, had built residences in Basra, Kūfa, Miṣr (Fustāt), and Alexandria, and had garnered 1,000 slaves, male and female. The ingots of gold and silver that Zaid b. Thābit left behind had to be chopped by axes. Talha's daily revenue from Iraq alone amounted to 1,000 dinars or more. And 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Awf possessed 1,000 camels and 10,000 sheep; the yield from his estate amounted to 84,000 dinars.

²⁰⁰ *Al-Fakhri*, p. 68. Māwardī records a somewhat different version: 'Umar was organizing an expedition; Hormazān, former governor of Ahwāz who was a captive in Medina asked how the Caliph would know if some men evaded the duty and remained behind. Then he suggested that 'Umar should institute a *dīwān* (*al-Ahkām al-sultāniyya*, p. 191).

¹⁹⁵ See Horn, *Etymologie*; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 53; and Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, p. 188, whose version of the MPers. form I have given here.

¹⁹⁶ See Tafazzoli, *Elr*, II, pp. 256-59, for a fuller list of examples.

¹⁹⁷ *Al-akhbār al-tiwāl*, p. 129. Mas'ūdī reports that Zubair b. 'Awwām had one thousand male and female slaves; see n. 199.

¹⁹⁸ See A. Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, pp. 85ff. and R. Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 63ff.

Reuben Levy has discussed borrowings from Persia in various fields, including architecture, coinage, pharmacology, military technique, music, and secretarial practices.²⁰¹ Cyril Elgood has outlined Persian contributions in the Islamic period in different branches of science (mathematics, astronomy, medicine, botany, chemistry).²⁰² Richard Ettinghausen has discussed at length in his seminal essay on the Umayyad palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar the various themes, motifs, decorative designs, and "profuse and varied Iranian elements" adopted in the building of the palace.²⁰³ His concluding comments on such borrowings are worth quoting:

The strong emphasis on the Iranian element may come as a surprise, considering that the building was erected in a territory with a longstanding Byzantine tradition, in which the Umayyads had established a successor state to the East Roman Empire. We should, however, realize that it was just during the reign of Hisham that the Arab government grasped that the various efforts to conquer the heartland of the Byzantine Empire in Anatolia and Europe, and particularly the capital at Constantinople, had failed; it therefore turned toward Iraq and the East. This shift went beyond a mere political reorientation and seems to have affected the whole mental outlook of the caliphs. Hisham, for example, commissioned an Arabic translation of a Persian illustrated history of all the Sassanian kings, and we know that Walid ibn Yazid used Persian idiomatic expressions. This change in the caliphs' official and personal orientations naturally led to identifications with the "Kura," an identification plainly reflected in the Throne Hall Khirbat al-Mafjar. Here the integration of Byzantine with Iranian elements finds its finest expression and much of the subsequent art in Muslim lands is due to the catalytic effect of this combination. (pp. 63f.)

No aspect of the Persian tradition was perhaps as culturally significant under the Umayyads as the creation of the Arabic epistolary style by 'Abd al-Hamid b. Yahya al-Katib²⁰⁴ (secretary to caliph

²⁰¹ "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 69ff. ²⁰² "Persian Science," pp. 292–317.

²⁰³ *From Byzantium to Sassanian Iran and the Islamic World*, chap. 3, particularly pp. 21ff., 31ff.; the quotation is from p. 41. Ettinghausen refers to a large number of primary and secondary sources concerning the Umayyad adoption of Persian customs, items of clothing, and court ceremonies, including the use of the *qalansuwa* or the Persian ceremonial hat (pp. 30–33), patterned silk (p. 32), and the *taj* or crown (p. 32). According to S. Shaked, "Some Themes in Transmission," in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, pp. 82–85, the fruit depicted in a central position is quince, a fruit that used to be offered to Sassanian kings on festive occasions.

²⁰⁴ Or by Abu'l 'Ala' Salim, the predecessor and teacher of 'Abd al-Hamid and secretary to Hisham, a Persian *mawla* of Sassanian sympathies and knowledgeable about Sassanian traditions, if we accept M. Grignaschi's argument ("Les 'Rasā'il Arstā'ālīsa," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 19 [1967] and "Le Roman épistolaire classique," *Le Museon*, 80 [1967], tentatively supported by J. D. Latham, "The Beginnings of Arabic Prose Literature," pp. 154–64), that the sixteen epistles

Hisham and chief secretary to Marwan b. Muhammad),²⁰⁵ who transferred Sassanian professional traditions to Arabic,²⁰⁶ and the creation of Arabic literary prose by Ibn al-Muqaffa'.²⁰⁷

'Abd al-Hamid and Ibn al-Muqaffa' both belonged to the class of *kuttāb* or secretaries, which greatly influenced the development of Islamic administration as well as caliphal court etiquette and Arabic

purportedly exchanged between Aristotle and Alexander, and forming part of that corpus of fictional literature that goes back ultimately to Pseudo-Callisthenes, are in fact Umayyad and predate the epistles of 'Abd al-Hamid.

²⁰⁵ On 'Abd al-Hamid and his place in Arabic letters see Ibn al-Faqih, *Buldān*, p. 194; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, II, p. 27; (Pseudo-) Jāhiz, *Kitāb al-tāj*, pp. 23, 146ff., 151, 160–64; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Iqd*, IV, p. 164; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 131; Tha'ālibī, *Yatimat al-dahr*, III, pp. 154–55; Jāhizyārī, *Wuzarā'*, pp. 72–83; Ibn Khallīlān, *Wafayāt*, no. 378 (and the sources mentioned in the footnote); *GAL*, S. I, p. 105; H. A. R. Gibb in *EP*, I, pp. 66. Tha'ālibī is considered the original author of the frequently cited epigram: "epistolary style began with 'Abd al-Hamid and ended with Ibn al-'Amid [the Buyid vizier]" (Tha'ālibī, *Yatimat al-dahr*, III, pp. 154–55). Cf. Wm. Brinner, *Elr*, I, p. 111. For the latest studies on 'Abd al-Hamid see A. F. L. Beeston, *Camb. Hist. Arab. Lit.*, 164ff., and W. al-Qadī's authentication of 'Abd al-Hamid's epistles: "Early Islamic State Letters" (1992), with extensive bibliography, pp. 222 and 223, nn. 15 and 17; see p. 223 on 'Abd al-Hamid being consistently considered "the founder of Arabic prose" and his epistles having become textbooks for the secretaries by Jāhiz's time. The corpus of 'Abd al-Hamid's writing has been collected, edited, and studied by Ihsān 'Abbās: *'Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahya* (1988) (I am indebted to Prof. Franz Rosenthal for the last two references).

²⁰⁶ See, however, 'Abbās, *'Abd al-Hamid*, pp. 55f., where he expresses doubt as to whether he had direct access to Persian works. There is, though, no doubt concerning his models and the tradition he was following, as W. Brinner points out:

The second lengthy *resāla* still extant is his "epistle to the secretaries," in which special emphasis is placed on the various fields of learning a secretary should master in order to carry out his task properly. [H. A. R.] Gibb states flatly that this work was clearly inspired by the tradition of the Sassanian secretariat, justifying the statement by 'Askari (d. 395/1005; cf. *Diwān al-ma'āni*, Cairo, 1352/1933–34, p. 89) that "'Abd al-Hamid extracted from the Persian tongue the modes of secretarial composition . . . and transposed them into the Arabic tongue." Brockelmann (*GAL* S. I, p. 105), citing the same author's *Kitāb al-senā'atayn*, p. 51.9, sees in his *rasā'il* something closer to translations of Pahlavi political rhetoric. Abd al-Hamid thus stands at the critical juncture in the development of the Arabic literary language at which the first full impact of foreign influences was felt." (*Elr*, I, p. 112)

²⁰⁷ The original writings of Ibn al-Muqaffa' are published by Kurd 'Alī in *Rasā'il al-bulaghā'*, pp. 1–172. For a discussion of the authenticity of some of the works attributed to him see Ihsān 'Abbās, "Nazra jadida fi ba'd al-kutub al-mansūba 'l'Ibn al-Muqaffa'." See also 'Abbās Iqbāl, *Sharh-i hāl-i 'Abd Allāh ibn Muqaffa'*; D. Sourdel, "La Biographie d'Ibn al-Muqaffa' d'après les sources anciennes"; Gibb in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, pp. 63–65; J. D. Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Early 'Abbasid Prose," pp. 48–77; J. D. Latham, "Ebn al-Muqaffa'," pp. 39–43; P. Charles-Dominique, "Le Système éthique d'Ibn al-Muqaffa'," pp. 45–66; Bosworth, "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," pp. 487–91; J. van Ess, "Some Fragments of the *Mu'aradāt al-Qur'ān*," pp. 151–63. F. de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kātilah wa Dimnah*. Shaul Shaked, "Religion and sovereignty are twins" in Ibn al-Muqaffa's theory of government"; Said Amir Arjomand, "'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the 'Abbasid Revolution."

prose literature. The formative and trend-setting secretaries of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods were generally of Persian stock and had a decidedly Persian orientation.²⁰⁸ To quote Claude Cahen, "An actual specialized class of officials came into being, the *kuttāb* ('scribes,' plur. of *kātib*), mostly arabized and islamized Persians, who also took an influential part in the field of culture and formed a counterpoise to the doctors of the Law."²⁰⁹ As Bosworth remarks,

Through the expanding class of secretaries (*kuttāb*), many of whom were imbued with the lore of the older Sassanian *dabīrān* or secretaries, certain Persian concepts in administration (*tadbīr*) and in polite society and literature (*adab*) gradually became part of the common fabric of Islamic culture. One illustration of this assimilation is the subsequently developing literary genre of "mirrors for princes," with its antecedents in the Persian *andarznāmas*, books of counsel. (*Elr*, I, p. 91)

With the Abbasid revolution the Persian impact gained considerable strength; the social position and political power of the *mawālī* increased dramatically, ushering in a new era of Islamic civilization. Moshe Sharon, echoing Goldziher, notes that the transfer of power from the Umayyads to the Abbasids

deserves to be regarded as the second major turning point in the history of the Arabs, the birth of Islam being the first . . . for with the advent of the Abbasids the whole nature of Islam was revolutionized . . . the horizon of Islam expanded through fruitful synthesis of the classical and oriental heritage and Islamic thought after the gates were thrown open to allow for the creative participation of non-Arabs in the now heterogeneous society in which the Arab element very quickly lost its predominance. (*Black Banners*, p. 19)

In almost all instances these statements refer to the first two centuries of Abbasid rule, the Golden Age of Islam, which E. G. Browne characterizes by "the ascendancy of Persian influence."²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ See Jāhīz, *Rasā'il*, p. 122ff. and below, p. 70 and n. 260.

²⁰⁹ "Economy, Society, Institutions," p. 532. See also Amīn, *Du'ha'l-Islam*, I, pp. 40–48, on the strong and increasing impact of the Persians during the early Abbasid period. It should be noted, however, that Dominique Sourdel, in *Le Vizirat 'abbāside de 749 à 936*, argues that in the early decades of Abbasid rule "Persianization" and the development of bureaucracy did not reach the level that was once presumed. Cf. Lassner, *'Abbāsīd Rule*, pp. 6–7, 135; and Humphreys, *Islamic History*, p. 120. On the other hand, Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, p. 138, notes that "Amongst the many viziers at the height of 'Abbāsīd rule there is hardly one of Arab descent, most of them being *mawālī* and Persians, and yet there are but few indications that such conditions were considered unnatural." See also *ibid.*, p. 34 on Persian secretaries. ²¹⁰ *Literary History*, I, p. 254.

The revisionist view

Of late a number of authors have raised doubts about the validity of the consensus on the role of Persians, or rather of Khurasanians, in bringing down the Umayyad caliphate and installing the Abbasids and shaping their polity. They play down the role of the native Khurasanians and the significance of Abū Muslim and other Persians in fostering and leading that revolution. They particularly call into question aspects of the traditional view propounded by two outstanding Islamic historians, Gerlof van Vloten²¹¹ and Julius Wellhausen,²¹² that the Abbasid revolution was in simple terms, a resurgence of the conquered Persians against their victors and that the Abbasid caliphate was essentially a restoration of Persian traditions in Arab guise.²¹³

The revisionist approach appears to have been initiated by D. C. Dennett's doctoral dissertation, "Marwān ibn Muḥammad: The Passing of the Umayyad Caliphate" (Harvard University, 1939), where he argued that the Abbasid revolution was of a political rather than a religious nature, and was rooted in Arab tribal strife, in which Arabs, rather than Persians, thus played a decisive role.²¹⁴

This view was supported in its essence by 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī,²¹⁵ Fārūq 'Omar,²¹⁶ and M. A. Shaban.²¹⁷ It has also been ardently defended by Jacob Lassner,²¹⁸ who follows to a large extent the views set forth by Moshe Sharon²¹⁹ in the latter's doctoral dissertation²²⁰ (updated and amplified as *Black Banners from the East*, 1983), who in turn followed an early lead by David Ayalon.²²¹

These authors generally react negatively to what had become "orthodox doctrine,"²²² according to which the Abbasid dynasty was "the culmination of a long struggle between the 'Arab Kingdom' of the Umayyads and the conquered population of a shattered Iranian

²¹¹ In *De Opkomst der Abbasiden in Chorasān* (1890) and "Recherches sur la domination arabe" (1894). For a judicious discussion of the content of these and the works referred to below, see Humphreys, *Islamic History*, pp. 116ff.

²¹² In *Das arabisches Reich und sein Sturz* (1902).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 348; tr. M. G. Weir, p. 558; cf. Lassner, *'Abbāsīd Rule*, p. 112.

²¹⁴ Dennett's thesis is summarized by F. 'Umar, *al-da'wa al-'abbāsiyya*, p. 91–92, and by M. Sharon, "'Abbāsīd Da'wa," ²¹⁵ "Daw' jadīd" (1957), pp. 64ff.

²¹⁶ *Abbasid Caliphate*, particularly pp. 132–36, and *Tabī'at al-da'wa al-'abbāsiyya* (1970), pp. 96–100, 131ff.

²¹⁷ *'Abbāsīd Revolution* (1970), particularly pp. xiiff. and 155ff. Cf. n. 63.

²¹⁸ *'Abbāsīd Rule*, pp. 3ff., 13–16; *Islamic Revolution*, pp. 75ff., 99ff.; "The 'Abbasid Dawla," pp. 249–52. ²¹⁹ See Lassner, *'Abbāsīd Rule*, pp. 7, 276, nn. 12–14.

²²⁰ "Alfiyat ha-'Abbāsīm la-shilṭōn" (1970). ²²¹ Sharon, *Black Banners*, p. 232.

²²² Lassner, *'Abbāsīd Rule*, p. 4.

empire,"²²³ and the Abbasid state "was essentially a new Iranian empire, albeit one dressed in the formal attire of a Persianized Islam."²²⁴ The revisionists argue instead, with some variations, that the revolt against the Umayyads developed primarily among the Arab tribes settled in Khurasan, more particularly those at Marv and the villages around it.²²⁵ These settlers, though Persianized and Persophone to a considerable degree,²²⁶ still retained an attachment to their origins and were dissatisfied with the loss of their privileges as fighting men (*muqātilla*) and at being subordinated to the landowning Persian gentry, who had been co-opted by the Umayyad administration. The revisionists emphasize that Abū Muslim was advised by a number of ranking Arab aides and political agents (*nuqabā*), notably Sulaymān al-Khuzā'i, 'Alī ibn Judayr al-Kirmānī, and Qaṭṭaba ibn Shabīb;²²⁷ that most Arabs of Khurasan favored the Abbasids because they held a broader interpretation of Islam than the Umayyads,²²⁸ and that although *mawālī* did participate in the Abbasid administration, the formulation and conduct of policy and coordination of political efforts were in the hands of Arabs.²²⁹

The chief documentary basis for the revisionist view is an anonymous manuscript, "Akhbār al-'Abbās wa waladihi" ("Accounts of 'Abbās and his Progeny"),²³⁰ possibly of the ninth century,²³¹ which has relatively recently come to light; the second part of it is devoted to the history of the House of 'Abbās until they came to power, and

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.* See Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 231–38, for a summary account of the "revisionist" view, and Elton Daniel, *Khurasan*, for a different approach to the question. An account of the controversy, with critical comments, can be found in Humphreys, *Islamic History*, pp. 104ff. Lassner lists major secondary literature pertinent to this discussion in "'Abbasid Dawla,'" p. 248, n. 1.

²²⁵ Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 65ff.; Shaban, 'Abbāsīd Revolution, p. 156. Daniel, *Khurasan*, p. 51, argues convincingly, however, that Marv was not the source but the focus of the revolution and that disaffection toward the ruling elements (Arab governing officials in league with Persian landed gentry) was broad-based: "It is impossible to accept the notion, advanced by Shaban, that the strength of the Abbasid rebels was derived from the Arab colonists in the Marv oasis" (p. 34).

²²⁶ See pp. 63f and n. 240.

²²⁷ For a breakdown of the ranking participants, and an analysis of their names, see Daniel, *Khurasan*, pp. 32–35 and Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 65ff., 191ff.; cf. Lassner, 'Abbāsīd Rule, p. 276, nn. 14, 15.

²²⁸ Omar, *Abbasid Caliphate*, p. 58; Shaban, 'Abbāsīd Revolution, p. xv.

²²⁹ Omar, *Abbasid Caliphate*, pp. 16–18, 57–58, 134–36. Cf. B. Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, p. 39.

²³⁰ Published by 'A. 'A. Dūrī and A. J. Muṭṭalibī under the title *Akhbār al-dawla al-'abbāsiyya wa fihī akhbār al-'Abbās wa waladihi* (Beirut, 1971) and tentatively identified by Sharon as the *Kitāb al-'Abbāsī* mentioned in the *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, pp. 145, 236, 237. See Sharon, "'Abbāsīd Da'wa,'" pp. xxxviii–xl; *Black Banners*, p. 235.

²³¹ The date is proposed by Dūrī and accepted by Sharon, *Black Banners*, p. 236.

contains a partisan account of the Abbasid call (*da'wa*), its origins, structure, and development as well as its military organization and the use made of the Arab tribes settled in Khurasan; it mentions the names of many political agents and missionaries who participated in the clandestine stage of the *da'wa*. Most important, it elucidates the Shi'ite origin of Abbasid propaganda in Khurasan and its shift later from Alid to Abbasid. Another anonymous work, "Dhikr banī'l-'Abbās wa sabab zuhūrihim" ("Report on the Descendants of 'Abbās and the Cause of their Appearance"), discovered by Qasim Samarrai in 1975, confirms the derivation of the Abbasid *da'wa* from early Shi'ism.²³²

Sharon argues from the content of "Akhbār al-'Abbās" that the short time available to Abū Muslim before the uprising was not sufficient to train the Persian villagers as fighting men. On the other hand, he could find such men among the Arab *muqātilla*; accordingly he first convinced the Yemenite faction of the dissatisfied Arab tribes settled in Khurasan, which was engaged in continuous feuding with the northern Arab tribes (*Mudar*), to join his cause. In this way he "was able to attract to his cause, *en bloc*, thousands of excellent fighters."²³³

Sharon has provided in his *Black Banners* the most detailed and best researched account of the background of the Abbasid propaganda movement: the initial Shi'ite ideological orientation, the clandestine operation of Abbasid agents in Iraq and Khurasan, and the backgrounds of the participants in the preparatory stages of the *da'wa*. His conclusions must, however, be weighed, as Stephen Humphreys urges, in the light of "two severe but exceptionally intelligent reviews,"²³⁴ one by Elton Daniel²³⁵ and the other by Patricia Crone.²³⁶ Daniel points to the methodological weakness of the book, its contradictions, and the absence of new ideas. He correctly challenges Sharon's claim that the leadership of the *da'wa* rested with Arab *muqātilla*, rather than a mixture of Arabs and *mawālī* largely homogenized according to Sharon himself by the Iranian milieu of Khurasan. Referring to Sharon's underlying conviction "that from

²³² For an account of "Akhbār," a critique of its content, and its historiographical significance see Daniel, "The Anonymous 'History of the Abbasid Family' and its Place in Islamic Historiography," pp. 419–34, and Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 234–36. For an abridgement of *al-Akhbār*, discovered and published as *Ta'rikh al-khulafā'* by P. A. Gryaznevich in 1967, see Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 233f. For other recently published sources see Humphreys, *Islamic History*, pp. 112f. and Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 231ff. ²³³ Sharon, "'Abbāsīd Da'wa,'" p. xxxiv.

²³⁴ *Islamic History*, p. 123. ²³⁵ *IJMES*, 21/4 (1989), pp. 578–83.

²³⁶ *BSOAS*, 1 (1987), pp. 134–36.

the days of the Umayyads to the present, all political formations among Muslims have rested on military power alone, and that therefore political change among Muslims is invariably the work of small military elites, never of popular mass movements," Daniel points out that "It is this presupposition, rather than the evidence, that seems to underlie his insistence on the decisive role of Arab *muqātila* in the Abbasid revolution" (p. 583).

Humphreys observes in his admirable survey and analysis of Islamic historical literature, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (1991), that two strands can be distinguished among the revisionists: "One insists that the Abbasid *da'wa* was aimed exclusively at dissident Arab factions, while the other argues that it was a mass movement of all the groups in Khurasan, however defined, which felt themselves aggrieved by the Umayyad regime and the native Iranian aristocracy which worked in league with it" (p. 121). I have already mentioned the major exponents of the first approach. The second is the position taken by Elton Daniel in his solid and methodologically prudent *Political and Social History of Khurasan* and by C. E. Bosworth (*Elr*, I, pp. 90–91) among others.²³⁷

The newly discovered works no doubt shed a welcome light on the nature of the *da'wa*, the secret organization in charge of it, the affiliation of the participants, and the events that led to the revolution. One can see now that the Abbasid revolution, rather than being a product of mere racial tension between Arabs and Persians in Khurasan, was the outcome of a general dissatisfaction among both the native inhabitants of the province and its settled Arabs, by now half Persianized, who had lost some of their earlier privileged positions as fighting men and were now fiscally subject to Persian

²³⁷ See also below, pp. 63ff. Humphreys notes, in *Islamic History*, p. 122: "Both Omar and Shaban seem to use their evidence rather selectively, and Shaban's assertive dogmatism is not so well-founded as he imagines." Even Lassner, an ardent supporter of the first approach, characterizes *Islamic History, a New Interpretation, II, A.D. 750–1050* (1976) by M. A. Shaban as "rather idiosyncratic and not altogether reliable in its documentation" (*'Abbāsid Rule*, p. 255, n. 6), and Humphreys describes it as "full of dogmatic but ill-documented assertions" (*Islamic History*, p. 119). Shaban bases his interpretation of Islamic history primarily on economic factors, consistently minimizing the religious motivation behind the events of the Abbasid revolution. Cahen, in "Points de vue," pp. 314, 318, 336; Lewis in *EP*, I, p. 19b; and Sharon in "'Abbasid Da'wa," pp. xxiii–xxv and *Black Banners*, pp. 19ff., on the other hand, lay stress on the religious aspect of the movement and point out that the term *da'wa* was intended to invoke the similarity between the Abbasid call and that of the Prophet. Daniel, in *Khurasan*, pp. 15ff., 26, 126, however, emphasizes sociopolitical and economic factors prevailing in Khurasan, without ignoring the religious dimension. See also S. Amir Arjomand, "'Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the 'Abbasid Revolution,'" pp. 9ff.

bureaucrats in charge of tax-collection; and that the revolutionary call was rooted in the Shi'ite claim to the succession of the Prophet and exploited the Muslims' affection for his descendants on the one hand and grievances against the Umayyads' abuse of power and their alleged cynical indifference to the spirit or the letter of religion on the other. It can also be realized that the treatment of non-Arab converts, particularly the peasants and the urban poor as underprivileged believers, had made them susceptible to seditious instigations; that economic hardships suffered by Persians and Arabs alike under the Umayyad rule had helped both groups to join cause against the ruling dynasty; and that the widespread grievances in Khurasan had assumed a religious coloring, and had found an outlet in supporting the call for a return to the pristine Islam of the Prophet's time and a total reorientation of the Islamic ethos. We learn that the propaganda began with great prudence and patience, first among the disappointed southern Arab tribes settled in Khurasan, particularly in Marv and the villages around it, far away from the center of Umayyad power, drawing on many Arab notables and appointing them as agents (*naqibs*) and propagandists (*dā'is*); that the identity of the imam was carefully kept secret, except from the highest leadership of the operations in Kufa and Khurasan; and that the direction of the *da'wa* was carefully planned and carried out in all its detail, leaving nothing to chance. We also learn how the Abbasids cleverly stepped into the shoes of the Alid leaders of the *da'wa*, dislodging them and usurping their place, with well-planned measures at self-legitimization, while at the same time disparaging the Alid claims and undermining their position.

It is now evident that Abū Muslim, the charismatic leader who brought some three decades of hidden activity to fruition, went beyond racial and fractional grievances; he emphasized the local and geographical unity of the revolutionary partisans as Khurasanians, boosting their local pride and welding them into a unified army bent on combating the Umayyads and bringing about a radical transformation.

What facilitated the work of Abū Muslim was that most of the Arab settlers in Khurasan by this time had been assimilated to the native population, many of them acquiring the Persian language in the process and identifying themselves with the social, economic, and agrarian conditions of the province. There are clear indications in the sources that the language spoken in the army that moved out from Khurasan against the Umayyad caliph was Persian. Ṭabarī quotes commands given in Persian to Abbasid soldiers in Egypt pursuing the

last Umayyad caliph, Marwān.²³⁸ Jāhīz emphasizes in his treatise on the virtues of Turks the homogenizing effect of geography and cites as an example the disappearance of differences between Arabs and the native inhabitants of Khurasan and Transoxania.²³⁹ Although I think that his statements in this treatise are, considering his purpose in writing it, at times exaggerated, the Persianization of the Arabs of Khurasan is confirmed in other sources.²⁴⁰

The Persian character of the Khurasanian army and its language is further confirmed by several indications in the account of the Khurasanian army that under the command of Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb, a general of Abū Muslim, attacked and pursued Naṣr b. Sayyār, the Umayyad governor of Khurasan, and conquered central and western Persia and Iraq for the Abbāsids. For instance, when his army was awed in Jurjān by the number of the enemy, Qaḥṭaba addressed them with a rousing speech, reminding them of the sovereignty of their forebears over Khurasan, adding that now God had given them a chance to regain their land from "the race of God's apostle" who had abandoned justice and piety.²⁴¹ A tribesman manages to get through the Abbasid line in Jurjān and carry the news of the Umayyad army's utter destruction by shaving his beard, tying a *kustaj* to his waist and pretending to be a "Magian" (*taṣabbaha bi'l-majūs*).²⁴² In Iraq during the attack of Qaḥṭaba on Ibn Hubayra, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, a small band of the latter's soldiers are pursued by Khurasanian fighters, when at some point one of them shouts in Persian "Leave these dogs!"²⁴³

One of the main factors that advanced the assimilation of Arab settlers to local Khurasanians was the fiscal and administrative policy of the Umayyads which could be traced back to the early Arab conquest of Iraq and Persia. Faced with the complexity of financial operations

²³⁸ E.g., *Dahid yā juvānagān*, "Give it to them, boys!" (as in the Leiden ed., III/1, pp. 50, 51; *jw'nkuth'n* in the Cairo ed., VII, pp. 441–42 does not make sense and must be a corruption of *juvānagān*). Cf. the Persian battle command expression *dehā-deh* "give! give!" See pp. 66f. for other indications of the character of the Khurasanian army. ²³⁹ *Manāqib*, esp. pp. 4–5, 40–41 (pp. 14–15, 56 of Muḥannā ed.).

²⁴⁰ See Levy in "Persia and the Arabs," p. 74; Sharon, "Abbāsīd Da'wa," pp. xxxii, 16; Sharon, *Black Banners*, p. 67; Lassner, *Abbāsīd Rule*, pp. 4, 122ff.; Daniel, in *EI*, II, pp. 213–14.

²⁴¹ Ṭabarī II/3, pp. 2004–2005. The speech is quoted, partly verbatim from Ṭabarī, also by Ibn Athīr V, p. 387. Baḥ'āmī gives a shortened version of it, II, p. 1027, but omits the reference to the forebears. For some other sources see Daniel, *Khurasan*, p. 94, n. 13.

²⁴² *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 331. Cf. p. 344, according to which Qaḥṭaba's army was called mockingly by his adversary "Oh, sons of free men! [*yā abnā' ahrār*, apparently a rendering of *āzādān*, Iranian free men]! They are only barbarian and Arab scum."

²⁴³ Ṭabarī III/1, p. 16.

and collection of taxes in the former Sassanian territories, the caliphs decided to adopt the established system and leave it in the hands of the *dehqāns* or landowning gentry, from which class the Sassanian bureaucrats were drawn. While this situation made for grievances on the part of the once highly privileged Arab fighters, it also tended to blend Arabs and Persians, who were now sharing the same fiscal burdens. Furthermore, many Arabs married Persian women, which in turn helped blur racial differences.

Thus, the army that marched out from Khurasan was imbued with a strong sense of esprit de corps, which continued long after the Umayyads were crushed and wiped out. It remained loyal to the Abbasid caliphs, who recognized its special ties to them. As noted by Bosworth,

for some eighty years, the Khurasanian guards or *jond* of the caliphs were to be the military support of the regime from their bases in the heartland of the caliphate, Iraq, while the old Arab tribal levies fell into disuse. These forces from eastern Persia were ethnically mixed, and "Khurasanian" referred to place of origin rather than to race. Their identification with the interests of the new state was fully recognized by the 'Abbāsids, under whom they rejoiced in the designation of *abnā' al-dawla*, "Sons of the Dynasty."²⁴⁴

It is relevant in this respect to note also the distrust of and sometimes sheer animosity of the early Abbasid caliphs toward the Arabs, possibly on account of the latter's tribal affiliation and the former's closeness and intimacy with the *mawālī*. The Abbasid leader Ibrāhīm al-Imām is reported by Ṭabarī II/3, p. 1937; III/1, p. 25, to have commanded Abū Muslim to kill every speaker of Arabic in Khurasan.²⁴⁵ According to Ṭabarī (III/1, p. 444) the caliph al-Manṣūr recommended to his son and heir, al-Mahdī, that he look after his *mawālī* and "bring them close to you and cherish them, for they are your support in adversity if it befalls you." According to another report, al-Manṣūr stated in his testament that he had gathered *mawālī* for al-Mahdī, the like of whom had not been gathered by any caliph before (III/1, p. 448).²⁴⁶ Further, according to yet another report in Ṭabarī

²⁴⁴ "Abbāsīd Caliphate," p. 90b. B. Spuler makes an interesting remark that in Khurasan the upper classes, to preserve their privileges, embraced Islam sooner than in other parts of the country and thus were able to preserve the administrative structure and many of the Sassanian traditions in the region, another factor which helped in absorbing Arab settlers and subjecting them to local Persian bureaucrats ("Iran: The Persistent Heritage," p. 172).

²⁴⁵ See Daniel, *Khurasan*, p. 46, n. 112, where he lists numerous other sources for variations of this order; cf. Lassner, *Abbāsīd Rule*, p. 276, n. 12.

²⁴⁶ See n. 260 for other reports and for al-Ma'mūn's attitude toward the Persians from Khurasan.

(III/1, p. 531), which is discussed at great length by Lassner,²⁴⁷ al-Mahdī was warned by his paternal great-uncle 'Abd al-Ṣamad against excessive intimacy with *mawālī*.

It should be noted further that the composition of the Khurasanian army is one thing; the consequences of its triumph is another. The collapse of the Umayyads ushered in a radical new attitude toward the eastern *mawālī* and opened the floodgate to active Persian participation in all functions of the Islamic state. The Abbasids, installed as the heads of both temporal structures and religious establishments, embraced a broader concept of Islam which offered non-Arabs full opportunity to serve the new order and to prove their worth. And Persians made the most of it. In the words of Wadād al-Qāḍi:

They [the secretaries] were mainly Persian by origin, and they believed they were competent civil servants; but above all, they were powerful government figures who were quite secure in their positions. Indeed, the persophile secretaries were perhaps never as mighty as they were in the first decades of 'Abbāsīd rule.²⁴⁸

They undertook major administrative, fiscal, and military responsibilities. If the Umayyads were elitists in favor of the Arabs, the early Abbasids may be called elitists in favor of the Persians.

The position that Persians held in the caliphal court and provincial administration reached its peak under al-Rashīd (r. 786–809), when the famous Barmacids assumed the vizierate and for seventeen years stood firmly at the helm of the Islamic government. Their fall in 803 did not, however, adversely affect the prominence of Persians in caliphal administration. This prominence continued through the reigns of al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'taṣim, ending when al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61) began to rely on Turkish guards.²⁴⁹

As mentioned above, newly discovered sources do not support the racial dichotomy in the Abbasid revolution that might be understood from some writings of earlier historians of Islam in the West; the sources demonstrate more extensive Arab involvement in the Abbasid cause and the Khurasanian army. Nonetheless, one should not gloss over the fact that in the contemporary assessment, the Khurasanian army was considered as Persian. The army later settled largely in the Ḥarbiyya suburb of Baghdad and formed the backbone and battle-ready core of the early Abbasid military

²⁴⁷ 'Abbāsīd Rule, pp. 91ff.; see also Daniel, *Khurasan*, pp. 46, 54, 70, n. 154.

²⁴⁸ "Early Islamic State Letters," p. 238.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Sourdel in *Camb. Hist. of Islam*, I, p. 116.

force; even the Arabs in the army "spoke Persian among themselves."²⁵⁰

The contemporary appraisal is notably reflected in the statement of Jāhīz (770–868), a confirmed anti-Shu'ūbī, who says that the Umayyad dynasty was called an Arab and the Abbasid dynasty an 'Ajam or Khurasanian state (*dawla*).²⁵¹ "Ajam," in opposition to "Khurasanian," precludes any interpretation of the latter but Persian. This is now confirmed by no less an eminent and reliable scholar than Bīrūnī, who, while discussing the claims of some Persian nationalists who had pinned their hopes on the Buyids to restore Persian rule, says, al-Āthār, p. 213, "That is what people used to promise each other regarding the restoration of the rule to the Persians, although the doings of the Buwaihi family were not like those of the ancient kings. I do not know why they preferred the Dailamite dynasty, whilst the fact of the transitus into a *fiery Trigonon* is the most evident proof indicative of the Abbaside dynasty, who are a Khurāsānī, an eastern dynasty" (tr. Sachau, p. 197). The fact that Bīrūnī does not mean the Arabs of Khurasan is abundantly clear from the context, which is about the renovation of the Magian religion and Persian sovereignty; Bīrūnī thought that the Abbasids better fitted the predictions of the Persian ultra-nationalists than the Buyids.²⁵² This view must have derived from the fact that Persians were identified as the main champions of the Abbasid cause and the chief architects of the overthrow of the Umayyads; it also reflects their dominant position in the affairs of the early Abbasid state. If Khurasan was the place where the revolutionary army originated, and if the currency of the Persian language in the Khurasanian army were not sufficient to justify Jāhīz's statement, the fact that the three undisputed leaders of the cause, Bukayr b. Māhān,²⁵³ Abū Salama Khallāl,²⁵⁴ and Abū

²⁵⁰ Lassner, 'Abbāsīd Rule, p. 122; see also p. 134.

²⁵¹ "Wa lau inna dawlatahum 'ajamiyya khurāsāniyya wa dawlatu banī marwān 'arabiyya, wa fi ajnād shāmiyya." *Bayān*, III, p. 366; cf. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, p. 147.

²⁵² Read *al-Sāmāniyya*, p. 213, line 6 from bottom for *al-Sāsāniyya* (which does not make sense), according to a note by S. H. Taqizadeh, who quoted from a MS of *al-Āthār* that was in the possession of Prince 'Alīqolī Mirzā Qajar.

²⁵³ Of Sijistānī (Sistānī) origin; see *EF*, I, pp. 1292–93; cf., however, 'Abbās Zaryāb in *Elr* III, p. 352, who calls him Marghazī (from Marv).

²⁵⁴ A Kufan *mawla* of means, married to Bukayr b. Māhān's daughter, Hamāma (see Tabarī, II/3, pp. 1916, 1949; III/1, pp. 16, 21ff., 58ff.; Ya'qūbī, II, pp. 383, 413, 418, 422; Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbar al-tiwāl*, p. 336; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, pp. 83ff.; Ibn Khallikān, II, no. 201 (pp. 195–97), tr. I, pp. 467–68; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, p. 294; for other sources see Sourdel, *Le Vizirat 'abbaside de 749 à 936*, I, p. 65, n. 1. As after the victory of the Khurasanian army Abū Salama was offering the caliphate conditionally to likely candidates, including a descendant of 'Alī (no doubt with Abū

Muslim, were Persian is surely sufficient to associate the thrust of the revolution with the *mawālī* from the East.²⁵⁵

Nor should we minimize, much less ignore, the anti-Arab and pro-*mawālī* sentiments that crystallized in Shu'ūbiyya rhetoric and gave expression to non-Arab Muslims' resentment at the Arab discrimination against them, particularly under the Umayyads. A Tradition attributed to the Prophet of Islam is revealing: "The ruin of the Arabs will come when the sons and daughters of Persia grow to manhood."²⁵⁶ "The Tradition," Bernard Lewis notes, "is certainly spurious, but like many such spurious traditions it reflects, very accurately, the issues and concerns of the time."²⁵⁷

To give enthusiastic prominence to a new discovery is understandable, especially if it seems to support one's general view of Islamic civilization, the purity of its origin, and its organic and indigenous development. Yet, I doubt that the content of *Akhbār al-'Abbās* or other recently recovered sources of lesser importance alters in a significant way the general picture that we gain from the reports of the major Islamic historians of the period, such as Balādhurī, Ṭabarī, Ya'qūbī, and Mas'ūdī, insofar as the position of the Persians and the

Muslim's concordance: see Ṭabarī III/1, p. 27; Ya'qūbī, II, p. 418; Ibn al-Athīr, V, pp. 314-15; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, pp. 86-87; Sourdel, *Le vizirat 'abbaside de 749 à 936*, I, p. 68), and considering the strong hand he took in running the affairs of the Abbasid state during the early months of al-Saffāh's caliphate (see Sourdel) it would be difficult to imagine that he did not also have a say in the formulation of the Abbasid polity. See also Jāhīz, *Manāqib*, p. 14 on the services of Abū Salama and Abū Muslim.

²⁵⁵ For the enormous power wielded by Abū Muslim before his murder, see Daniel, *Khurasan*, pp. 78ff., and Lassner, *'Abbāsīd Rule*, pp. 60-62. Cahen in "Points de vue" alluded to the possibility that Abū Muslim may have been born to an Arab father and a Persian mother, but this is hardly tenable; he was a *mawālā* and was regarded as a Persian (even though there was some ambiguity about his place of birth and parentage), or else partisan authors of the Abbasid era and the anti-Shu'ūbīs would not have hesitated to emphasize his Arab lineage. For a brief review of the works on Abū Muslim, see Humphrey's *Islamic History*, pp. 123-24. The ambiguity of his origin and birth place or his status as a slave has been discussed by most revisionist authors; see notably Sharon, *Black Banners*, pp. 203-208, and Lassner, *Islamic Revolution*, pp. 99ff. For the claim of his Turkish origin see *Islam Ansiklopedisi* under Ebu Muslim, and Omar ('Umar), *Tabī'at al-da'wa*, p. 89. Cf. R. N. Frye "The Role of Abū Muslim in the 'Abbasid Revolution" (1947), p. 28, and S. Moscati, *Studi su Abū Muslim*, I, 323ff.

²⁵⁶ 'Atā' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Muttaqī, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, VI, pp. 214-15, *apud* Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, p. 39.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Typical of such sentiments among Persian nationalists are the jibes against the Arabs that Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī quotes in his *Kitāb al-imtā' wa'l-mu'ānasa*, pp. 78f. and reprimands their author, [Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad], the Samanid vizier and scholar Jayḥānī (cited and translated by Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, pp. 141, 144-45). See *Kitāb al-imtā'*, p. 78, n. 11, and Ṣafā, *Tā rīkh-i adabiyāt*, I, p. 350 on Ṭayḥānī.

increase of their participation in the affairs of the Islamic state after the success of the revolution is concerned.

As for van Vloten and Wellhausen, who have been particularly singled out for revisionist criticism because of their ground-breaking views,²⁵⁸ I share Humphreys's sober and more balanced view. He draws attention to the fact that van Vloten's account is more nuanced than is often supposed:

For example he does not posit a crude racial interpretation of the revolt in Khurasan, but a socio-political one: it was less a question of Persians against Arabs than of oppressed subjects (mostly Iranian) against the ruling class (mostly Arab). (*Islamic History*, p. 17)

And he offers the following comment on Wellhausen:

If van Vloten was the pioneer in this subject, the imam is without doubt Julius Wellhausen. *Das arabische Reich* remains even after ninety years one of the sovereign achievements of Western Orientalism. Wellhausen was the first to grasp the whole socio-political milieu within which the Abbasid Revolution occurred, and he reconstructed this milieu with a richness of detail never since attained. (p. 17)

And after devoting a thoughtful chapter in his *Islamic History* to a survey of the literature on the Abbasid revolution, Humphreys concludes, "All this speaks very highly of the persuasiveness and durability of the basic interpretive framework devised by van Vloten and Wellhausen" (p. 127).²⁵⁹

The "revisionists" themselves stress the fact that the net result of the Abbasid revolution was a decline of the Arab element and its ceding place to non-Arab *mawālī*. Discussing a key military strategy of Abū Muslim, who replaced the earlier tribal affiliations in the *diwān* register for military benefits and pensions by the towns and villages from where the soldiers came, Sharon, for instance, remarks:

By altering the law for the registration in the army roll, Abū Muslim enabled non-Arabs to enlist in the army on the same status as the Arabs. This was a revolutionary act, which later bore decisive and far-reaching historical consequences. . . . The Arabs were gradually dropped from the *diwān* and their places were taken by Iranians and later on by Turks. . . . Thus the *da'wa*, although initiated and fostered mainly by Arabs. . . [and] although it installed

²⁵⁸ See above, p. 54.

²⁵⁹ Shaban has complained that scholars like W. Montgomery Watt, C. Cahen, B. Lewis, and C. E. Bosworth continue to rely on the "erroneous conclusions" of van Vloten and Wellhausen (*'Abbāsīd Revolution*, p. xiii) – an interesting commentary on the "new consensus," which J. Lassner claims (*'Abbāsīd Rule*, p. 4) has developed against their views!

an Arab dynasty in power, nevertheless paved the way to the decline of Arabs as an active element in the Islamic state. ("Abbasid Da'wa," p. xxxvi)

The gravitation of the caliphate toward the East after the Abbasid revolution, the preponderance of Persian viziers, advisers, secretaries, and fiscal officers in the early Abbasid administration, and the abundance of Persian authors, poets, and musicians in contemporary cultural life can hardly be denied.²⁶⁰ The training and interests of the secretarial class, or the bureaucrats, which dominated court administration, were focused on Sassanian traditions. Jāhiz in his treatise on the censure of the secretaries (*Kitāb dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, pp. 191–94) has an eloquent, sardonic passage in which he draws a vivid picture of Abbasid secretaries, the "intellectuals" of their time, and their clearly Persian orientation and their disdain of Arab traditions and literary virtues:

Once your novice scribe has sat down in the seat of power, taken his place in the council of the caliphate, arranged a wicker screen to separate himself [from the common herd] and placed his inkstand in front of him, once he knows by heart the more spectacular clichés by way of rhetoric and the more elegant rudiments by way of science, and has learnt the maxims of Buzurgmihr, the testament of Ardāshīr, the epistles of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd and the *adab* of Ibn al-Muqaffa', and taken the *Book of Mazdak* as the fountainhead of his learning and the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection [of tales] as the secret treasury of his wisdom, he sees himself as the great Fārūq in matters of administration, as Ibn 'Abbās in exegesis, as Mu'adh b. Jabal in knowledge of the lawful and the unlawful, as 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in the fearless delivery of judgments and sentences . . . His first task is to attack the composition of the Koran and denounce its inconsistencies. Next he demonstrates his brilliance by controverting the historical facts transmitted by tradition and impugning the traditionists. If anyone in his presence acknowledges the pre-eminence of the Companions of the Prophet he pulls a grimace, and turns his back when their merits are extolled . . . And then he straight away interrupts the conversation to speak of the policies of Ardāshīr Pāpāgān, the administration of Anūshīrwān, and the admirable way the country was run under the Sāsānians . . . The proof of these people's behaviour lies in the fact that no scribe has ever been known to take the Koran as his bedside reading, exegesis as the

²⁶⁰ For the institutionalization by al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī of the use of *mawālī* in Abbasid administration, see Tabārī, III/1, pp. 414, 444, 448, 531. For praise that Ibn al-Muqaffa' heaps on the Khurasanians and their virtues see his *Risāla fi'l-shāhāba*, a "manual" of government which he wrote under al-Manṣūr, pp. 347f. For the report about the caliph al-Ma'mūn's preference for the Persians of Khurasan (*al-'ajam min ahl Khurāsān*) over all manner of Arabs, see Tabārī III/2, p. 1142. Cf. Ibn Tayfūr, p. 89, and Lassner, *Abbāsī Rule*, pp. 107ff. Cf. also W. al-Qāḍī, "Early Islamic State Letters," p. 238, commenting on the secretaries of the early Abbasid era.

foundation of his learning, religious knowledge as his escutcheon, or the study of traditions as the cornerstone of his education. If by any chance you come across one quoting passages from the Koran or the *sunna*, his jaws seem to stick as he utters the words, and his saliva does not flow smoothly. Should one of them choose to devote himself to *ḥadīth* research, and take to quoting the jurists, his colleagues find him tiresome and perverted: they accuse him of depravity and professional incompetence in attempting to go against nature and pursue a branch of learning for which he was not intended.²⁶¹

Barthold's remarks on the Abbasid viziers address the same point:

The well-balanced administrative system of the Sasanids, which was regarded by the Arabs as the highest example of wise statecraft, served as their model. Their wazirs (this office also in its bureaucratic sense was created by the Abbasids) who, from the time of the Caliph Mansur, had belonged to the famous Persian family of the Barmakids, considered themselves the direct successors of Buzurgmihr and other semi-mythological statesmen of the Sasanid epoch. (*Turkistan*, p. 197)²⁶²

The institution of the vizierate has been largely associated with the Sassanian administrative practice. A number of scholars have even assumed that the word *wazīr* derived from a Middle Persian word *vičīr* or *vičīr* (decision, judgment, a legal document reflecting a decision).²⁶³

Several scholars, however, including V. V. Barthold, M. Sprengling, S. D. Goitein, and D. Sourdel, have reacted to such a derivation or even the idea of a Persian model by pointing out that the word is a genuine Arabic word used in the Koran and also by Muḥammad's contemporary poets in the sense of "aid, assistant."²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Abridged tr. by C. Pellat, *Life and Works of Jāhiz*, tr. from French by D. M. Hawke, pp. 274f. Cf. H. A. R. Gibb's assessment: "The secretaries . . . learned by heart the epistles of Abd al-Hamid, the manual of protocol (*adab*) of Ibn al-Muqaffa, and if they needed more they sought from other Persian works. Their thought was oriented exclusively towards the ancient culture of the Sasanid court; what guidance for the execution of their duty could they expect to get from the Bedouins and the traditions of desert Arabia?" ("Social Significance of the Shu'ūbiyya," pp. 63–64).

²⁶² Cf. Mas'ūdi, *Murūj*, pars. 577ff.; *Tanbih*, p. 105, Tabārī I/1, p. 353, Sa'īd Andalusī, p. 62, and T. Khalidī, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 91f., on the alleged superiority of the Persians in statecraft and politics, administration of justice, harmony between religion and the state, foundation of cities, levying of fair taxes, attending to the prosperity of agriculture, and the upkeep of *qanāts*, roads, and frontier lines.

²⁶³ See J. Darmesteter, *Etudes iraniennes*, I, p. 58, n. 3; A. Christensen, *L'Empire des sassanides*, pp. 33, 56; cf. A. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 133; F. Babinger, *EP*, IV, pp. 1196, s.v. *wazīr*; cf. T. Nöldeke, *Perser und Araber*, pp. 53, n. 1 and 444, n. 3.

²⁶⁴ V. V. Barthold (W. Barthold), "Die persische Shu'ūbiyya," pp. 257–61; M. Sprengling, "From Persian to Arabic," pp. 331–36; S. D. Goitein, "The Origin of the Vizierate," pp. 168–75; D. Sourdel, *Le Vizirāt 'abbāsī de 749 à 936*, I, pp. 41–61, who provides a thorough review of the controversy.

One should differentiate, however, the word and the institution. The latter, whether it grew out of the office of the secretaries (*kātib*s),²⁶⁵ whose profession in later Umayyad courts had drawn much inspiration from the Sassanian practice and style (see above, pp. 56ff.), or was a reinvention of the early Abbasids, owed a great deal to Sassanian practice. The institution's beginning and its flourishing period coincide with the rise of the Persian *mawālī*, their occupation of the vizierate for several successive generations, and the adoption of many Persian administrative measures, court etiquette, dress and headgear, and festivals. The seventeen years of the supremacy of Yahyā b. Khālid the Barmakid and his sons Faḍl and Ja'far under Hārūn al-Rashīd from 786 to 803, with their proclivity for Persian ways,²⁶⁶ increased the impact of Sassanian traditions at the caliphal court and largely shaped the function and practice of the vizierate.²⁶⁷ It was the awareness of this situation among the Abbasid authors that gave the Sassanians the widespread reputation of having excelled in the art of government and of having been distinguished among other nations by proficiency in *tadbīr* and *siyāsa* (planning and management) of their realm.²⁶⁸ It appears that it was also through the awareness among the early Abbasid authors of the fact that the Abbasids were following Persian models and their belief that these caliphs were helped to power by the '*ajam*' of Khurasan (see above, p. 67) that the Abbasid

²⁶⁵ Cf. Jahshiyārī, p. 83, who names 'Abd al-Ḥamid wazīr of Marwān II. Cf. Barthold, "Die persische Šu'ūbiya," p. 260, who maintains that the Umayyad *kātib*s, counterparts of Sassanian *dapīrs*, evolved into Abbasid viziers.

²⁶⁶ See above, n. 18. See W. Barthold in *EP*, I, under "Barmakids," and R. Mottahedeh, "The Abbasid Caliphate," pp. 68–71, for an account of their administrative and fiscal measures. Their having descended from a noble Buddhist family of Balḫ hardly resulted in less familiarity with or sympathy for Iranian traditions. Balḫ was a strong center of Iranian culture, as evidenced by the preeminence of poets and authors from Balḫ who brought about the Persian cultural renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries. See G. Lazard, *Les Premiers Poètes*, I, pp. 17ff., and E. Yarshater, "The Persian Renaissance and the Rise of Persian Language and Literature."

²⁶⁷ B. Spuler, in "Iran: The Persistent Heritage," pp. 171ff., is of the opinion that the Islamic conception of state in the first centuries of its existence adapted itself to Iranian views in Persia itself and elsewhere; he draws a number of parallels between the Abbasids and the Sassanians and emphasizes, p. 174, the "guild" of the secretaries and the managers of the *diwāns*, apart from the office of vizier, as the vehicles of Persian influence.

²⁶⁸ Typical is the statement of Šā'id Andulusī in *Tabaqāt al-umam*, p. 62: "wa a'zam fadā'il mulūk al-furs allatī ishtaharū bi-hā ḥuṣn al-siyāsa wa jūdāt al-tadbīr lā siyāmā mulūk banī sāsān min-hum" ("The greatest virtue of the Persian kings, for which they were famous, was the aptness of administration and excellence of planning, particularly the Sassanian kings among them"). See also Jāḥiẓ, *Manāqib*, ed. Hārūn, p. 67.

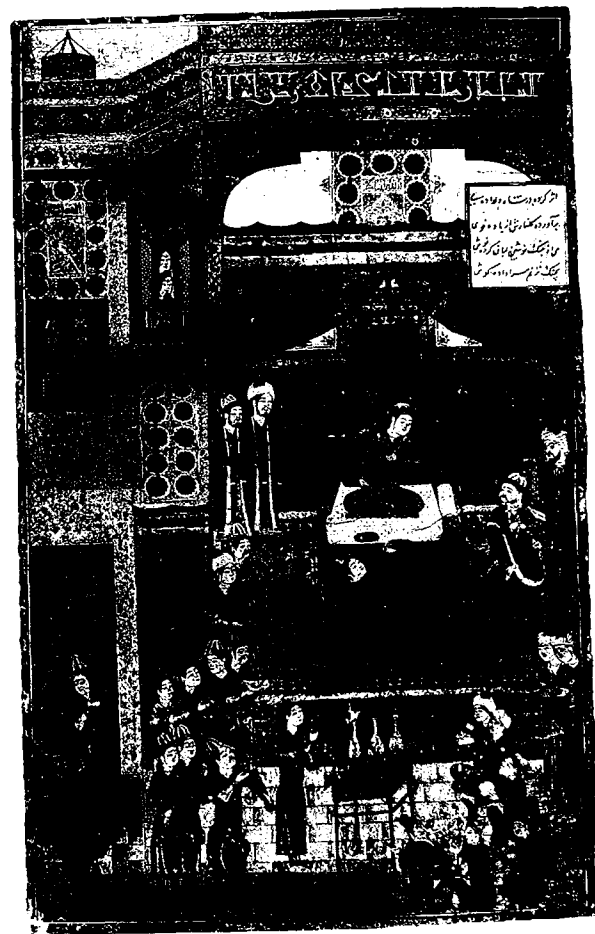


Plate 1 "Humay at the court of the Faghfur of China"



Plate 2 "Humay at the gate of Humayun's castle"



Plate 3 "Humay and Humayun battling"



Plate 4 "Humay and Humayun feasting in a garden"



Plate 5 "Bihzad found by Humay and Azar"



Plate 6 "The unwelcome guest at a mosque"



Plate 7 "Nomadic encampment"

caliphate was known, in the words of Jāhīz, as a Persian and Khurasanian state.²⁶⁹

The development of the Abbasid institution of the vizierate under the influence of the Sassanian administrative system was both an aspect of the prevalence of the Persian models and an instrument of consolidating the influence.

Thus the ascension of the Abbasids to the throne was concomitant with the rise of the *mawālī* (the great majority of them Persian) to positions of power and influence, and with the readjustment of Islamic developments to the demographic, geographical, and cultural realities of the Muslim population; they were conducive to the advent of the Golden Age of Islam.²⁷⁰

It is against this early Abbasid period that the presumed stagnation and decline of Islamic civilization in subsequent centuries are

²⁶⁹ See above, p. 67. The fashioning of the institution of vizierate through Persian influence and inspiration has been subscribed to by, among others, and apart from those already mentioned, M. Enger (see above, n. 99); A. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 133, who considers the office of secretaries and viziers in the Islamic state "an exact copy of the Iranian model" (see Goitein, "The Origin of the Vizierate," pp. 168–69 and C. Cahen in von Grunbaum, ed., *Unity and Variety*, p. 180, for a criticism of this stand); R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 256 and n. 2 (first ed., 1907, *apud* Sourdel, *Le Vizirat 'abbaside de 749 à 936*, I, p. 43); Sprengling, "From Persian to Arabic," pp. 331–36, who makes it clear that the Middle Persian *vičir* was never used in the sense of any office holder, but the Persian influence as the substratum of the function of the Abbasid vizier was fairly probable, and even suggests a possible way whereby the offices of a secretary (*dapīr*) and judge (*vičir(kar)*) could have merged to provide a basis for the office of the *wazīr*; P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 358ff.; B. Spuler, "Iran: The Persistent Heritage," p. 173, who, following Christensen, considered the vizier's position to duplicate that of the Sassanian *wuzurg framādhār*; C. Cahen, "The Body Politics," p. 146, who suggested the Sassanian tradition as the basis of the institution in spite of the Arabic etymology of *wazīr*. Among those who minimize the influence of an Iranian model or inspiration, apart from Goitein, one may mention von Grunbaum (*Medieval Islam*, p. 159) and some of the "revisionist" students of the Abbasid revolution (see above, pp. 58ff.). A fair assessment of the origin of both the word *wazīr* and the corresponding institution, as well as a judicious review of the controversy, is presented by D. Sourdel, *Le Vizirat 'abbaside de 749 à 936*, I, pp. 41–61, and II, pp. 565–77.

²⁷⁰ Such considerations should not, however, obscure the fact that in its first phase Islamic civilization was primarily an Arab civilization, for three reasons. First, the sociopolitical framework was based on Islam, an Arabian religion. Second, its effective leadership remained for at least two and a half centuries with Arab caliphs. And third (and no doubt this is the most important reason), during this phase Arabic was the dominant language of the Islamic world and the repository of the major cultural manifestations of the Islamic peoples. No matter where the poets, writers, and scholars originated and what their background or mother tongue may have been, their works in Arabic must be considered as part of Arabic literature, as at a later date works written in Persian by Indian, Anatolian or central Asian Turkic writers belong to Persian literature.



Plate 8 "A school scene"

measured. But the notions of "stagnation" and "decline" in Islam are predicated on what Marshall Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, I, p. 40, called a "philological approach," according to which Islamic civilization is generally equated with Arabic culture and the supposed decline of Islamic civilization in the eleventh century or earlier with the decline of that culture which is expressed in Arabic. But followers of this approach miss the significance of a second phase of Islamic civilization, the phase that has given us the outstanding examples of Islamic art and architecture, mystical philosophy, and literature.

The Persian phase of Islamic civilization

It is important to distinguish clearly between the first, or Arabic, and the second, or Persian, phases of Islamic civilization. As a result, partly of a concentration on the earlier centuries of Islam and partly of a relative lack of proficiency with languages other than Arabic, many Islamicists have failed to grasp this distinction. When, however, the entire breadth of Islamic civilization is taken into account and a comprehensive vision is not hampered by linguistic limitations or narrow regional interests, a different appreciation of Islamic culture, its foundations, and its evolution is possible. This point has not, of course, been lost on the more careful historians of the Muslim world. For instance, Barthold wrote in 1918, though perhaps without the necessary emphasis: "It is usual to attribute to the XIth century the highest point to which Mussulman culture has ever attained as well as the beginnings of its decline. As a matter of fact, progress in many of the branches of cultural life, in any case in Persia, continued during a few centuries more."²⁷¹ H. A. R. Gibb equally remarks of post-Abbasid developments (in spite of his "persistent anti-Iranian bias"²⁷²):

meanwhile, a revived and in some respects brilliant, Persian Muslim civilization grew up in the Mongol dominions. It too excelled in architecture and the fine arts, including the art of miniature painting; spiritually it was rooted in Sufism. Persian culture molded the intellectual life of the new Islamic empires that were growing up on either side [of Persia] in Anatolia and the Balkans, and in India.²⁷³

Hodgson elaborated on the same phenomenon:

Toynbee had reason for setting off the Later Middle Period as the creative age of a whole new civilization, which he styles the Iranic. In Iran in the fifteenth century, and especially in its latter part, we find a creative ferment in the arts

²⁷¹ *Mussulman Culture*, p. 95.

²⁷³ *Mohammedanism*, p. 17.

²⁷² Humphreys, *Islamic History*, p. 188.

and in related aspects of life which bears many striking analogies to contemporary life in Renaissance Italy, and which issued in the new life of the sixteenth century.²⁷⁴

By the tenth century a new culture, grounded in the Persian language and traditions, had indeed arisen in the eastern lands of Islam, that is, Khorasan, Seistan, and Transoxania,²⁷⁵ from where it was spreading in all directions. Of the Samanids (tenth century) and the Persian renaissance Ira Lapidus writes:

Like the Abbasids, the Samanids were also patrons of a fabulously creative Islamic culture. In the tenth century, Bukhara emerged as the center of a new Persian-Islamic literature and art as Arabic religious, legal, philosophic and literary ideas were recast into Persian. For the first time the religion and culture of Islam became available in a language other than Arabic. (*Islamic Societies*, p. 141)

He points out, too, that under the Ghaznavids (eleventh century), who followed the Samanids, patronage of Perso-Islamic culture, a slave army, and a centralized administration became the defining features of Middle Eastern regimes (p. 141).

The Buyids, too, who *de facto* brought to an end the power of the caliphs for a hundred and ten years (945–1055), helped advance the Persian consciousness in a number of ways,²⁷⁶ although their involvement with Iraq and the caliphal politics somewhat distracted their efforts in this respect. For the next seven centuries Persian culture was the focus of creative vitality within Islamic civilization.²⁷⁷ Not until

²⁷⁴ *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 372. Hodgson ranks the Safavid era "from Behzad the painter [d. 1450] to Mulla Sadra the philosopher (d. 1640)" as a Golden Age and a "Persianate flowering," and he compares it to the Italian Renaissance in the Occident (*Venture of Islam*, III, p. 49); but I must point out that there is a major difference between the two. The exuberance of Persian art in the sixteenth century is the last phase of a flourishing artistic movement that was destined, together with Persian society itself, to decline soon afterward, whereas the Italian Renaissance marked the beginning of a new and forceful civilization in the West that has given rise to civil society and has not lost its vigor yet. The flowering of Persian art in the Safavid period would be more aptly compared to a swan song.

²⁷⁵ For the unity of these regions see Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-taqasim*, p. 260, who presents arguments for treating them together; see also Barthold, *Turkistan*, p. 197, who points out the subordination of Transoxania to Khurasan.

²⁷⁶ V. Minorsky, "Iran: Opposition, Martyrdom, and Revolt," p. 186, is of the opinion that both the Ziyerds and Buyids, whose reign constituted an "Iranian intermezzo" between rule of the Arabs and the Turks, assisted Iranian self-awareness: "it seems to me," he writes, "then, that the Buyid age, which liquidated the Arab rule and organized Persia on bases antithetical to Islamic orthodoxy, was of primary importance for the formation of national consciousness of the Persians" (p. 187). For a less sanguine view see T. Nagel in *Elr*, IV, pp. 584f. and R. Mottahedeh in *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, IV, pp. 68–71.

²⁷⁷ See von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 88, who calls the works of the Persian renaissance "the basis of a second great cultural unit within the *umma Muhammadiyya*."

the eighteenth century did it in turn become exhausted and succumb to the vigor and imperial designs of the West. It was indeed after the tenth century that the greatest literary geniuses of Persia and the most outstanding representatives of its ethos were producing their work,²⁷⁸ at a time when Arabic Islamic culture had passed its prime and entered a relatively undistinguished phase, a period that R. A. Nicholson characterizes as "a melancholy conclusion to a glorious history."²⁷⁹

After commenting on the political condition of the Arabs and their widespread loss of independence after the Mongol invasion, Nicholson remarks:

In such circumstances it would be vain to look for any large developments of literature and culture worthy to rank with those of the past. This is an age of imitation and compilation. Learned men abound . . . but with one or two conspicuous exceptions – e.g. the historian Ibn Khaldūn and the mystic Shā'irānī – we cannot point to any new departure, any fruitful ideas, any trace of original and illuminating thought . . . and since the Mongol invasion I am afraid we must say that instead of advancing farther along the old path he [the Arab] was being forced back by the inevitable pressure of events . . . and moreover, the Arabic language was rapidly extinguished by the Persian . . . nowhere in the history of this period can we discern either of the two elements which are most productive of literary greatness: the quickening influence of a higher culture or the inspiration of a free and vigorous national life. (*Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 442–43)

Our reservations about an Arabocentric approach to Islamic culture are not based solely on the resulting inattention to the Persian scene. The literary courts of the Saljuqs of Mawṣil and Anatolia, the splendor of Ottoman art and architecture at its height, and the Indo-Persian civilization that flourished in Mughal India in the sixteenth century, with its rich art and architecture, literature, historiography,

²⁷⁸ See pp. 78f. below.

²⁷⁹ *A Literary History of the Arabs*, 2nd ed., p. 443. Naturally there were exceptions; the philosopher Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), the mystic Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), the biographer Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282), the brilliant historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), the historian Maqrīzī (d. 1442), and the literary scholar Suyūfī (d. 1505) may be counted among them. Ibn Khaldūn's comment on the regression of the Arab nation after the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in the thirteenth century is revealing: "they forgot political leadership and returned to their deserts . . . They became, once again, as savage as they had been before . . . When the caliphate disappeared and was wiped out, governmental power passed altogether out of their hands. Non-Arabs took over the power in their state. They remained as Bedouins in the desert, ignorant of royal authority and political leadership. Most Arabs do not even know that they possessed royal authority in the past, or that no nation has ever exercised such [sweeping] royal authority as had their race" (*The Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthal, I, pp. 307–308).

and mystical works, must also be taken into account. Were all these achievements manifestations of a deteriorating culture, or were they rather the fruits of a new creativity within Islam? Hodgson time and again emphasizes the Persian phase, or zone, of Islamic culture:

The rise of Persian had more than purely literary consequences: it served to carry a new overall cultural orientation within Islamdom. Henceforth while Arabic held its own as the primary language of the religious disciplines and even, largely, of natural science and philosophy, Persian became, in an increasingly large part of Islamdom, the language of polite culture; it even invaded the realm of scholarship with increasing effect. It was to form the chief model for the rise of still other languages to the literary level. Gradually a third "classical" tongue emerged, Turkish, whose literature was based on the Persian tradition . . . Most of the more local languages of high culture that later emerged among Muslims likewise depended upon Persian, wholly or in part, for their prime literary inspiration. We may call all these cultural traditions, carried in Persian or reflecting Persian inspiration, "Persianate" by extension. (*Venture of Islam*, II, pp. 293–304)²⁸⁰

No doubt the first centuries of Islam were distinguished by a spirit of inquiry, theological probing, and intellectual vitality. The rise of Arabic prose literature with its rich vocabulary, resonant cadences, and eloquence and the development of Arabic poetry into a cosmopolitan literature also belonged to that period. But the arts, whether architecture, painting, ceramics, or calligraphy, indeed, the arts of the book in general, did not reach their zenith until after the thirteenth century in Persia, Anatolia, and India, long after the "Golden Age" had passed. The major developments in the art of the Islamic lands took place from the second half of the eleventh century.²⁸¹ Is not art a major component and a significant criterion of culture? Are not the poetry of Firdausī (tenth–eleventh century), Niẓāmī (twelfth century), Rūmī (thirteenth century), Sa'dī (thirteenth century), and Ḥafīz (fourteenth century) the most brilliant manifestations of Persian literary gifts? Have they not provided inspiring models for generations of Indian, Turkish and central Asian poets writing in Persian or in their native tongues?

The small but culturally radiant court of the Khwārazmshāh Ma'mūn II in the early eleventh century in Transoxania,²⁸² which boasted such luminaries as Avicenna, Bīrūnī, Abū Sahl Mas'ūdī, and Abū Maṣnūr Tha'ālibī, imparts no impression of stagnation. Nor does the splendid court of Maḥmūd of Ghazna in the eleventh

²⁸⁰ Cf. *A Literary History of the Arabs*, 2nd ed., pp. 307, 372–73, 486; von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 150. ²⁸¹ Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art*, p. 213.

²⁸² See Bosworth in *Elr* I, pp. 762–64; and in *EF*, IV, p. 1065ff.

century, with its shining constellation of poets, represent a cultural decline. Those who think that by the eleventh century Islam had left its creative phase behind and was entering an era of cultural quiescence and slackness neglect the new upsurge of Perso-Islamic culture, which was already maturing in the Persian-speaking eastern regions of Islam.

It is particularly important to recognize the prominence of Persian art in the Islamic world. This prominence is so striking that Oleg Grabar thinks one should seek an explanation for it:²⁸³

The later importance of Iran in Moslem culture and specially in Islamic art is so great as almost to demand some sort of hypothesis about what happened during the first centuries of Moslem rule.²⁸⁴

It must be noted that some branches of Persian art, particularly painting, began to develop only after the twelfth century and reached their culmination in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The flowering of the arts and letters was not necessarily bound to political events,²⁸⁵ for they reached their peak in a period marked by destructive raids and widespread carnage wrought by Timur and the Turkmens in the wake of the even more devastating Mongol invasion.

It is also helpful to remember that the different aspects of a culture do not necessarily flourish and decline at the same time. For instance, the developments of architecture and music in France are not contemporaneous, and the rise of poetry, music, and architecture in Great Britain does not follow parallel curves. Nor do the nations that partake of a common culture exhibit equal strength in all areas; the Germans, who have excelled in music and poetry, may not claim to rival the Italians in painting and sculpture.

As to the Iranian world, Persian poetry reached a high point in the tenth and eleventh centuries, with poets like Firdausi (d. 1021) and Farrukhi (d. 1038), and continued to reach summit after summit until the fourteenth century, when it reached its highest point in the work

²⁸³ *Formation of Islamic Art*, p. 37; cf. p. 213.

²⁸⁴ Cf. p. 213. On the *muqarnas* having been invented in northwestern Iran, see p. 181; on the earliest innovations in ceramics in Iraq and northwestern Iran, p. 182; on the spread of stucco, the *iwan*, and decorative motifs from Persia to other regions in the Islamic world, p. 208; on the great changes that characterize Islamic art appearing from the middle of the eleventh century onwards, p. 213. On Persia as the cradle of Islamic metalwork and the continuation of the Sassanian tradition until the Saljuq period, see Fehreveri, "Art and Architecture," p. 721. Cf. R. Ettinghausen, "Interaction and Integration in Islamic Art," who notes the continuation and the impact of Sassanian art in the Islamic art (p. 115) and points to the survival of the *aiwan* (*iwan*) architectural features in *madrasas* (pp. 116f.).

²⁸⁵ See Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art*, pp. 9–10.

of Hāfiz (d. 1389). Like a soaring fountain that reaches its apogee it then began to decline, though not without yet producing some notable figures. Persian painting, on the other hand, began to show real creativity only after the twelfth century and reached a peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a period marked by much turbulence, bloodshed, and destruction. Calligraphy, a major Persian art form, revealed its true dimensions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and even later, with the development of the elegant *nasta'liq* style. The *shikaste* (broken or cursive) style of Persian penmanship characterized by lyrical curves, dancing lines, and fascinating twists and turns appeared only in the eighteenth century. It would therefore be implausible to speak of "progress" and "decline" as blanket characterizations of a society's artistic and intellectual creativity. In terms of purely artistic and literary accomplishments, it might even be said that the second phase of Islamic culture was superior to the first.

The obvious contradictions inherent in assuming that Islamic civilization as a whole declined from about the eleventh century are in fact the result of confusing the decline of that phase or aspect of this civilization that was expressed in Arabic and was centered in the seats of Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatimid powers with the decline of Islamic civilization. Von Grunbaum, with his usual perceptiveness, tried to rectify this one-sided approach to Islamic cultural history.²⁸⁶ But the most forcible critique has been presented by Hodgson, who described this approach as one

in which everything carried in Arabic, including pre-Islamic pagan Bedouin customs, is regarded as native and ancestral to the civilization that later expressed itself largely in Arabic; while materials in Syriac, for instance, produced in the mainstream of cultural development under the earlier Muslim rulers and leading directly to central features in the urban life of the civilization, are regarded as "foreign" to it, and as "influencing" it . . . What a difference of tone if rather we should look at the problems posed, by an overlay of Arabic "borrowing" upon Iranian and Syriac "survivals!"²⁸⁷

The same issue lurks behind H. A. R. Gibb's reference to the conflict between the classical taste of the philological school of the Arabs and the predilection of the secretaries and bureaucrats for the "Persian tradition" in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period:

For the cleavage between the two schools was itself a reflection, an external manifestation of the division which was to be found in all aspects of the social

²⁸⁶ *Classical Islam*, pp. 88, 137. See also Spuler, "Central Asia," p. 165 on the rise of "a Persian Islam side by side and on equal terms with an Arab Islam."

²⁸⁷ *Venture of Islam*, I, p. 32. Cf. pp. 40–41.

and intellectual life of the age. A new civilization is not created in a day, and the conflict between the Arab tradition and the Persian tradition went down to the roots. The issue at stake was no superficial matter of literary modes and fashions, but the whole cultural orientation of the new Islamic society – whether it was to become a re-embodiment of the old Perso-Aramaean culture into which the Arabic and Islamic elements would be absorbed, or a culture in which the Perso-Aramaean contributions would be subordinated to the Arab tradition and the Islamic values. (*Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, pp. 65–66)

Gibb concludes that eventually the second prevailed, but certainly not without first adopting and absorbing much of the Persian traditions and skills, as far as the Arabic phase in the early Abbasid era is concerned. Gibb's conclusion fails to be applicable altogether to the second phase of Islamic culture, when Islamized Iranian traditions prevailed. Von Grunebaum's remark about Arabic style is relevant here:

The dichotomy of mentalities which can legitimately be illustrated in the difference between the *fughah* and the *kuttab* corresponds to the two forms of education which were soon to come into conflict: the Arabic-grammatical style which concerned itself both with the study of Writ and with the bedouin tradition – especially its classical poetry, and the Persian- (or Indo-Persian) inspired style which, cultivating an elegant contemporary town Arabic, drew primarily from Iranian legendary history, and took pleasure in finding new forms of refined love motifs of a sentimental "platonic" stamp. (*Classical Islam*, p. 87)

Montgomery Watt, quoting the latter part of this passage, observed: "The final outcome owes much to those scholars who reproduced Persian material in Arabic and who by their philological studies made Arabic a fitting instrument for a great culture."²⁸⁸ Pointing to the gradual acceptance of the long-established Persian cultural heritage into Islam, C. E. Bosworth writes:

Already by this time [the ninth century], we can discern a distinct Persian imprint on an important sector of Arabic prose literature, that of *adab*, and it is not too much to say that it was primarily impulses from Persia which moulded the very characteristic and influential genre of Arabic literature and thereby provided a channel of entry for many of the older Persian political and ethical concepts into Islamic civilization as a whole.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ *Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 173. Cf. above, p. 9.

²⁸⁹ "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," p. 485. A Persian secretary of al-Ma'mūn is quoted to have said to the caliph on the nature of *adab*: "The arts of refined culture are ten: three are Shahrajāni, three are Anūshirvāni, three are Arab and one exceeds them all. The Shahrajāni [belonging to Persian nobility] arts are

A radical revision of the long-cherished view to which Hodgson referred raises the question whether Abbasid civilization was a phase of Arab life and culture "influenced" chiefly by Iranian and Syriac cultural traditions, or, on the contrary, a phase of Iranian and Syriac civilizations with an overlay of Arab traditions, particularly language.²⁹⁰

In looking at Islamic civilization from a broader point of view, Hodgson took his cue from Arnold Toynbee, who traced its origin to "Iranian" and "Syriac" societies. Toynbee argued that these two societies first came together in the Persian empire of the Achaemenids (559–330 BCE). As Persia and the eastern Roman provinces, respectively, they became rivals and antagonists again during most of the long centuries that followed the breakup of the Achaemenid empire, especially during most of the Sassanian period (224–651 CE), when conflict between Persia and Byzantium was almost continuous. This continual conflict could not but waste the energies and resources of "Iranian" and "Syriac" societies and in the end contributed to the collapse of both. Their unification again under the banner of Islam rechanneled their energies into more positive activity and fruitful cooperation and resulted in the spectacular civilization that flourished in the early Abbasid period. Toynbee thus regarded the Abbasid caliphate as a reincarnation of the Achaemenid empire, and the function of the Abbasid caliphate a "reintegration" or "resumption" of Achaemenid society. "In fact the union of the territories under the Abbasid regime [was] a reunion," he wrote.²⁹¹

Toynbee's theories have been both greatly admired and severely criticized. Many of his assertions are speculative and not subject to proof, but he does introduce a point of view and an interpretive scheme that changes the entire perspective on the Islamic history of the Middle East, particularly the range and function of Persian and Syriac traditions within it. The unification of the two parts of what he

lute-playing, chess, and polo; the Anūshirvāni ones are medicine, mathematics, and equestrian skill; the Arabic ones are poetry, genealogy, and historical knowledge; but the one which exceeds them all in value is the retelling of stories and evening conversations which people indulge in at their convivial gatherings" (p. 495).

²⁹⁰ In this respect an observation by Ibn Khaldūn is worth noting: "Sedentary culture was always transferred from the preceding dynasty to the later one. The sedentary culture of the Persians was transferred to the Arab Umayyads and 'Abbāsids . . . that of the 'Abbāsids was transferred, successively, to the Daylam, to the Saljūq Turks, to the Turks in Egypt, and to the Tatars in the two 'Irāqs." *The Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthal, I, p. 351.

²⁹¹ *A Study of History*, I, p. 77. Cf. a similar view expressed by B. Spuler, "Iran: The Persistent Heritage," p. 169.

called the "Irano-Syriac society," which was later divided again into Persian and Arabic zones within the Muslim world, was no doubt more successful under the Abbasids than under the Achaemenids, and for obvious reasons. The integration was not, however, as fully successful as it may seem, nor as enduring. Whereas the peoples of the western part of the empire had been proud to assume Arab identity, "the Persians retained," in the words of Goldziher, "a great pride in their glorious past long after they were conquered, and guarded zealously the traditions of this past."²⁹²

The resulting tension between the two major components of Islamic culture and the restiveness among the Persians manifested itself in a series of movements and uprisings, particularly in Khurasan and Transoxania. The Abbasid revolution, on which the Persians had pinned their hopes and the success of which they considered partly their own, proved far less satisfactory than anticipated. The murder of their hero, Abū Muslim, by the capable but wily caliph al-Manṣūr proved a severe blow to their hopes of gratitude and recompense. A combination of disillusionment, injured pride, and nostalgia led to a series of religio-political movements and revolts, nearly always based on a millenarian vision,²⁹³ for example, led by Bihāfarīdh, Sunbādh, Muḡanna', and Bābak Khurramdīn, as well as the later Shu'ūbī movement, and finally to the founding of local Persian dynasties.

In his attempt to trace present-day Islamic society to its immediate sources, Toynbee distinguished an "Iranic" and an "Arabic" zone. The Iranic zone extended from the Sea of Marmara to the basins of the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers and through Afghanistan to the northern plains of India as far as the Bay of Bengal.²⁹⁴ This huge region, which came into its own culturally and politically only after the fall of Baghdad in the mid thirteenth century, was eventually articulated into the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, where despite large Turkish and Indian populations, the vehicle of cultural expression was the Persian language. The Arabic zone comprised Syria, Egypt, and north Africa, where Arabic was predominant.

As a literary medium, Persian spread far and wide. Turkish dynasts became cultivated patrons of Persian arts and letters and introduced them to Anatolia, the Turkish areas of Transoxania, and India.²⁹⁵ A vast corpus of Persian poetry and prose was produced in those regions. Persian literature was in fact the product not of Persia alone

²⁹² *Muslim Studies*, I, p. 135; cf. Amīn, *Duḥ'ī Islām*, pp. 175-76.

²⁹³ For details of these movements see G. H. Sadighi, *Mouvements*. For a brief survey see 'A. H. Zarinkūb, *Tārīkh-i mardun-i Irān*, pp. 59ff.

²⁹⁴ *A Study of History*, I, p. 68. ²⁹⁵ Cf. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, pp. 486ff.

out of a more extensive cultural area. The creative impulse was, however, rooted in Persia, and Persian concepts, images, and styles furnished the models. Toynbee's assessment of the role of the Persian language is worth quoting in more detail:

In the Iranic world, before it began to succumb to the process of Westernization, the New Persian language, which had been fashioned into literary form in mighty works of art . . . gained a currency as a *lingua franca*; and at its widest, about the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the Christian Era, its range in this role extended, without a break, across the face of South-Eastern Europe and South-Western Asia from the Ottoman *pashalyq* of Buda, which had been erected out of the wreckage of the Western Christian Kingdom of Hungary after the Ottoman victory at Mohacz in A.D. 1526, to the Muslim "successor-states" which had been carved, after the victory of the Deccanese Muslim princes at Talikota in A.D. 1565, out of the carcass of the slaughtered Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar. For this vast cultural empire the New Persian language was indebted to the arms of Turkish-speaking empire-builders, reared in the Iranic tradition and therefore captivated by the spell of the New Persian literature, whose military and political destiny it had been to provide one universal state for Orthodox Christendom in the shape of the Ottoman Empire and another for the Hindu World in the shape of the Timurid Mughal Raj. These two universal states of Iranic construction on Orthodox Christian and on Hindu ground were duly annexed, in accordance with their builders' own cultural affinities, to the original domain of the New Persian language in the homelands of the Iranic Civilization on the Iranian plateau and in the Basin of the Oxus and the Jaxartes; and in the heyday of the Mughal, Safawi, and Ottoman regimes New Persian was being patronized as the language of *litterae humaniores* by the ruling element over the whole of this huge realm, while it was also being employed as the official language of administration in those two-thirds of its realm that lay within the Safawi and the Mughal frontiers. (*A Study of History*, V, pp. 514-15)

Whether in this vast "Iranic zone" we are dealing with the Persian presence in the Islamic world or the presence of Islam in the Iranian world depends on the point of view taken. Hodgson, as mentioned earlier, considers the latter perspective.²⁹⁶ A scholar who adopted it, at least with regard to the Persian mystical philosophy of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī and his followers, the philosophy of the Isfahan school (seventeenth century), and much of Imami and Isma'ili Shi'ism, was Henry Corbin, Professor of Arabic and Islamic philosophy at the Sorbonne and successor to Louis Massignon at the Collège de France. He produced some remarkable syntheses, if rather

²⁹⁶ *Venture of Islam*, I, p. 32.

speculative and at times too imaginative, of diverse elements in Islamic thought.²⁹⁷ He saw basic Iranian concepts re-emerging or rather continuing in Shi'ite Islam and in "oriental" or illuminationist philosophy (*ḥikmat al-ishrāq*) as manifested in the works of writers from Suhrawardī down to Mullā Ṣadrā of Shīrāz (d. 1640) and the mystic philosophers of Qajar Persia. This is the thrust of his *Terre céleste et corps de resurrection* (1960), which bears the subtitle *De l'Iran mazdēen à Iran shī'ite* and which includes an anthology of texts in support of his thesis.²⁹⁸

Corbin's understanding of Iranian religious philosophy was further elaborated in his main work, *En Islam iranien*, a work in seven books (published in four volumes, 1971–72), in which he set out to prove the continuity of philosophical concepts in Persia from ancient times to the nineteenth century, as manifested in Zoroastrian beliefs, the illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī and his followers, and Persian Shi'ite thought (Imami or otherwise) with its characteristic esotericism and recourse to hermeneutics.²⁹⁹ He sums up the argument presented in the first two volumes thus:

Within the Islamic community, the Iranian world has formed from the beginning a totality (*ensemble*), the characteristic traits and vocation of which will not be made clear unless one considers the Iranian spiritual world as forming a whole, before and after Islam. (IV, p. i)

Corbin saw the Zoroastrian "philosophy of light," the motif of the *lumière de gloire* (*xorrah*, Avestan *Xvarnah*), and Iranian angelology as immanent in Shi'ite imamology and implied in Persian mystic philosophy. All such survivals could be made manifest with the help of hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*, literally, "restoring to origins or to the primary"). In assessing the work of Suhrawardī, he wrote:

²⁹⁷ For a judicious critique of Corbin's work see H. Algar, "The Study of Islam: The Work of Henry Corbin," pp. 85–91. See also A. Caspar, "Muslim Mysticism: Tendencies in Recent Research"; and M. Mahdi, *Orientalism and the Study of Islamic Philosophy*, pp. 91–94.

²⁹⁸ "The philosophy of Iranian Islam," he writes, "whether Shi'ite or not, has been so little studied until now in the West that experts on ancient Iran, as well as specialists in Muslim philosophy as such, sometimes appear surprised, if not irritated, when one reveals a connection unexpected in the agenda . . . In order to succeed in adequate representation, one should probably renounce some of our habitual categories." *Terre céleste*, p. 100.

²⁹⁹ *En Islam iranien*, I, pp. x, xvii, 4, 12ff.; IV, pp. v, xv, xiv, xviii–xix. For a descriptive account of this work by D. Shayanfar see *Elr*, VIII s.v. (forthcoming). See also Amir-Moezzi's *Early Shi'ism*, pp. 13ff., 69ff., 108ff., and 125ff., who elaborates on the esoteric and hermeneutic aspects of Twelver Imamism.

His works themselves clearly express his purpose: to receive the wisdom of ancient Persia, the philosophy of light and darkness; to bring back home the hellenized magi, and this thanks to hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*), the resources of which became accessible to him through Islamic spirituality. It is characteristic that this metaphysics of light identifies the primordial source of this [light] with what the Zoroastrian theosophy designates as *xvarnah* or "the light of glory." (II, p. iv; cf. pp. 23, 51ff., 81ff.)

In this context we may recall the close association of Persia with a Gnostic outlook that gave rise to one of the characteristic traits of Iranian Islam: Sufi mysticism. We must strongly refute, together with E. G. Browne, *Literary History*, I, p. 419, the notion of Sufism as "the reaction of Aryan mind against a Semitic religion imposed upon it by force" or "an essentially Persian product," considering that such influential mystics as Dhu'l-Nūn of Egypt (d. 861), Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240–41), and Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 1234–35) had not a drop of Persian blood in their veins. It must be borne in mind, however, that Persia unmistakably took the lead in developing, expanding, and propagating Sufi thought. It was in Persia that Sufi mysticism was intimately and intricately wedded to poetry.³⁰⁰ It was also in Persia that outstanding mystical poems by Sanā'ī (d. c. 1150), 'Aṭṭār (d. 1221), Jāmī (d. 1492), and Bedil (Bidil, d. 1721) were written. Above all there were the poems of Rūmī (d. 1273), whose *Mathnawī* Browne ranked "among the great poems of all time" (*Literary History*, II, p. 515) and of whom H. A. R. Gibb said: "For many Persians and Turks, the *Mathnawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn ar-Rūmī had replaced the Tradition of the Prophet as commentary on, and interpretation of, the religious and ethical teachings of the Koran" (*Mohammedanism*, p. 168). Again it is to Persia that the origins of Sufi orders in the Indian subcontinent, Asia Minor, and Turkistan are to be traced.³⁰¹

Persian culture in other Islamic lands

Even if we choose to discount Toynbee's views, on the grounds that he was not primarily a historian of Islam; if we dismiss some of Hodgson's

³⁰⁰ "The Persian genius alone," wrote F. Gabrieli, "gave the Muslim mysticism the glory of a luxuriant poetic bloom . . . and all the great minds of the West from Goethe to Hegel, who sought to approach this aspect of Muslim spirituality, actually took as their guides not the Arabic ascetics or doctors but the great Persian poets," "Literary Tendencies," p. 100.

³⁰¹ See Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 215 on Sufi orders practically all being derived from Persian *pirs* or masters. On Sufi orders founded by Persians, see Arberry, in *Camb. Hist. of Islam*, pp. 621–22. See also von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 131, on the development of Sufism, "whose main phases can be connected primarily with the names of Hasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), al-Muḥāsibī (d. 857), and Junaid (d. 909), all of Persian stock."

challenging opinions as too radical; and if we consider some of Corbin's assertions idiosyncratic and too speculative,³⁰² we can hardly entertain such reservations about E. J. W. Gibb, author of the standard *A Literary History of Ottoman Poetry* in six volumes, whose name has lived on in an important series of publications of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts, the Gibb Memorial Series. Gibb classifies Ottoman poetry between the Old School, from the fourteenth century to about the middle of the nineteenth, during which time Persian influence was dominant; and the Modern School, which came into being as a result of the Western impact. According to him (I, p. 7), the Turks very early "appropriated the entire Persian literary system down to its minute detail, and that in the same unquestioning and wholehearted fashion in which they had already accepted Islam." By the thirteenth century the Saljuqs had, in the words of the same author,

attained a very considerable degree of culture, thanks entirely to Persian tutorage. About the middle of the eleventh century they [that is, the Saljuqs] had overrun Persia, when, as so often happened, the Barbarian conquerors adopted the culture of their civilized subjects. Rapidly the Seljuq Turks pushed their conquest westward, ever carrying with them Persian culture . . . So, when some hundred and fifty years later Sulayman's son [the leader of the Ottomans] . . . penetrated into Asia Minor, they [the Ottomans] found that although Seljuq Turkish was the everyday speech of the people, Persian was the language of the court, while Persian literature and Persian culture reigned supreme. It is to the Seljuqs with whom they were thus fused, that the Ottomans, strictly so called, owe their literary education; this therefore was of necessity Persian as the Seljuqs knew no other. (*Ibid.*, p. 10)

Gibb goes further still, observing that,

the Turks were not content with learning from the Persians how to express thought; they went to them to learn what to think and in what way to think. In practical matters, in the affairs of everyday life and in the business of government, they preferred their own ideas; but in the sphere of science and literature they went to school with the Persian, intent not merely on acquiring his method, but on entering into his spirit, thinking his thought and feeling his feelings. And in this school they continued so long as there was a master to teach them; for the step thus taken at the outset developed into a practice; it became the rule with the Turkish poets to look ever Persia-ward for guidance and to follow whatever fashion might prevail there. Thus it comes about that for centuries Ottoman poetry continued to reflect as in a glass the several

³⁰² For a judicious critique of Corbin's work see Algar's "The study of Islam" and A. Caspar, "La Mystique musulmane: recherches et tendances," pp. 271-89 (I am thankful to Prof. Algar for furnishing me with these references); and Amir-Moezzi, *Early Shi'ism*, pp. 211-12; Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, pp. 3-4; and F. Daftary, *The Isma'īlīs*, p. 33.

phases through which that of Persia passed . . .³⁰³ So the first Ottoman poets, and their successors through many a generation, strove with all their strength to write what is little else than Persian poetry in Turkish words. But such was not consciously their aim; of national feeling in poetry they dreamed not; poetry was to them one and indivisible, the language in which it was written merely an unimportant accident. (p. 13)³⁰⁴

The Persian model in poetry and in what Gibb called "the Persian mystic-philosophic system"³⁰⁵ was followed not only in the Turkish of Anatolia but also in the Chaghatai of Turkistan³⁰⁶ and later in Urdu in Muslim India. On the spread and influence of Persian at the Mughal court V. A. Smith writes:

Both Turki and Persian were spoken at his [Emperor Akbar's] court, but the former tongue in the course of time dropped out of use, while the latter became the recognized official and literary language. The highly Persianized form of [western] Hindi known by the name of Urdu, or the camp language, which developed gradually as a convenient instrument of communication between natives and foreigners, was often almost identical in vocabulary with Persian as spoken in India, while retaining the grammatical structure of an Indian tongue. (*Akbar*, p. 8)³⁰⁷

³⁰³ Cf. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V, p. 515: "The new Persian language and literature were staples in the intellectual education of the *Ich-oghlan*s who were the *corps d'élite* among the neophytes in the Ottoman Pādīshāh's Slave-Household, and the influence of this Persian mental background naturally persisted among the adult lights and leaders in the Ottoman court and camp. The redoubtable Ottoman militarist Sultan Selim the Grim amused his leisure by writing Persian verse with better success than ever attended the Hohenzollern militaristic King Frederick the Great's poetic efforts in French." On the Turks being the "cultural representatives of Iran," see von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 150; on their imitation of Iranian culture and Persian poetry being their model of literary inspiration, see F. Iz, "Turkish Literature," pp. 683-88, 692.

³⁰⁴ *Literary History*, I, p. 29. On the Persian impact on all three Turkic dialects and the imitation of the ornate style of Persian in Turkish, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 486. On the penetration of the culture of Bukhara and Samarqand in eastern Turkistan, see Spuler, "Central Asia," p. 472. "Three ethnic groups," wrote F. Gabrieli, "underwent the religious and cultural influence of Islam through Persia as intermediary: the Hindus, Mongols, and Turks . . . The group of Turkish Islamic literatures, primarily the Chaghatai and the Osmali, depends much more closely on the Persian model than Persian literature had ever depended on Arabic; these literatures, indeed, add nothing to their model that is new in either spirit or form, while we have seen the importance of what Persia brought to the literary patrimony of Islam," "Literary Tendencies," p. 101.

³⁰⁵ *Literary History*, I, p. 14.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Gabrieli, "Literary Tendencies," pp. 101f: "[The Islamized Turkish literature] from its first efforts . . . leaned directly upon Iranian models . . . taking on its character as a courtly, conventional, and imitative art. The same is true for the whole Chaghatai literature (which culminates at the end of the fifteenth century with Nevā'ī at the court of the Timūids)."

³⁰⁷ See Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 47, 293-94, 307, on Persian as the international language during the Safavid era and the language of culture and poetry in

The Persian influence in India began with the Ghaznavid Mahmud's conquest in the subcontinent. It accelerated under the Ghurids (1000–1215) and more particularly the Delhi sultans (1206–1555). As Gavin Hambly notes:

Because of its origins and subsequent history, the sultanate provided for three and a quarter centuries a unique opportunity for the continual transmission to India of a broad range of cultural manifestations emanating from the Persian plateau: language and literature, customs and manners, concepts of kingship and government, religious organization, music and architecture. (*Elr*, VII, p. 242)

Among many who have pointed to Persian art as the basis for Mughal painting and calligraphy in India, I may quote one of the latest authors, Ira Lapidus:

Similarly, Indian painting was derived from Persian ways of figure drawing, illumination, and calligraphy, but it took on specifically Mughal qualities which emphasized line and form rather than color. While Mughal painting depicted court and hunting scenes, battles, animals, flowers, portraits and other motifs of Persian art, it also drew inspiration from Hindu subjects and landscapes. Paintings were used to illustrate both Persian and Hindu literary works, including the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and were produced by artists of both religious backgrounds.³⁰⁸

Also Persian monuments served as models of much of Indian architecture of the Islamic period at different times, particularly of the seventeenth century, the most brilliant period of Mughal architecture, when "in the Punjab and at Delhi and Agra Persian tile architecture flourished anew."³⁰⁹ H. Goetz, to whom this quotation belongs, after enumerating a large number of monuments built in Persian fashion, refers to their best known one:

The most famous monument representing this Persian taste, however, is the Taj Mahal (Rauza-yi Momtāz Mahal) at Agra, the mausoleum of Arjumand Bānū Bēgam, Nūr-Jahān's niece, and of her husband Shāhjahān. It is a work of finest Safavid taste. . . . Except for the use of the most immaculate Makrana marble which translates the gay and gaudy Persian taste into the dreamy, languid spirit of later Mughal art, there are in the Taj Mahal only a few other deviations from Safavid orthodoxy. . . . (*ibid.*, p. 112)

As to the ensuing period, the eighteenth century, "In the Panjab and Sind this Persian style continued to prevail. The buildings and

the eastern half of the Islamic world; on "unrestrained borrowing from Persian" in Urdu prose and poetry, see Aziz Ahmad, *Camb. Hist. of Islam*, II, pp. 695–97, 699, 700. ³⁰⁸ *Islamic Societies*, p. 458. See also pp. 82ff. above.

³⁰⁹ H. Goetz, "Persia and India," *Legacy of Persia*, p. 111.

gardens of Aurangzeb's time at Lahore, which have already been mentioned, preserve the Persian type" (*ibid.*).

Thus the most vibrant and productive culture in the Islamic world for about six centuries was the Persian, providing paradigms for thought, repertoires of imagery, artistic models, and a philosophical outlook for a vast region stretching from Anatolia to Bengal, until it was superseded by Western notions and values in modern times. If we were to characterize the two phases of Islamic civilization, we might say that the first phase was more intellectual, the second more artistic; the first more theological, the second more mystical; the first more inquisitive, the second more contemplative.

While Persia was in the process of generating and exporting its own species of Islamic culture, the western part of the Islamic world, by then exhausted and debilitated, was drifting and soon became a possession of the Ottoman state, thus coming indirectly under the influence of the Iranian zone. From the last decades of the seventeenth century Iranian society itself began to weaken and decline,³¹⁰ producing derivative art and jaded poetry and indulging in a debased form of Sufism, with only occasional, ephemeral attempts at resuscitation or revivals, settling at last, like Arab society before it, for dreams of past glory.

What are we to conclude from this brief survey of the Persian presence in the Islamic world? Before I present my summation I may observe that, despite the exaggerations of some Persian authors who tend to minimize the significance of Arab elements in the foundation and development of Islamic civilization, as well as authors who depreciate the importance of non-Arab factors, the mainstream of Islamic scholarship has remained as a rule immune both to the Aryan racial claims and theories (as first propounded by the Comte de Gobineau in the nineteenth century) and to their Semitic counterparts. More typical have been scholars of the British, Dutch, French, and German schools, some of whom I have quoted or referred to.

It is interesting to note that four outstanding scholars who held in succession the Sir Thomas Adams Professorship of Arabic at the University of Cambridge from 1902 to 1969, E. G. Browne, R. A. Nicholson, C. A. Storey, and A. J. Arberry, were without exception attracted to Persian literature and produced their major works in this

³¹⁰ See Browne, *Literary History*, IV, pp. 24–28; Yarshater, "Indian or Safavid Style?," Browne, ed., in *Persian Literature*, pp. 249–88; Foran, "Long Fall," pp. 281–304.

field.³¹¹ One might add Reuben Levy, author of *The Social Structure of Islam*,³¹² who was appointed professor of Persian at Cambridge in 1950, and who has left us, among other works, an abridged prose translation of the *Shāhnāme*.³¹³ These scholars, like many other Arabists and Islamicists, were drawn to Persian studies because they found a pervasive beauty in its poetry and art, an alluring character in its traditions, and something profound in its mysticism and spirituality.³¹⁴

Summation

To sum up, indigenous Persian culture received a severe blow with the collapse of the Sassanian empire. The language fell from literary grace, and the ancient Zoroastrian faith of the country was degraded almost to the status of a pagan creed. In one respect, however, military defeat proved liberating for the Persians, who no longer suffered from the oppressive social and religious constraints that had prevailed in late Sassanian times. It gave new impetus to their creative energies. The Persian intellectual elite dedicated itself to Islam and to Arabic and helped to shape, consolidate, and diffuse a cosmopolitan Islamic civilization. Although no other element in the Islamic world matched the unifying effect of the religion brought from Arabia, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Persians took the lead in developing Islamic civilization. It is perhaps not profitable to single out scholars, artists, and social and political leaders who contributed to the genesis or growth of Islamic culture on the basis of their ethnicity, for Islam was a collective and cooperative venture in which diverse elements and traditions were combined. Many leaders were brought up in an Islamic milieu that tended to weaken or obliterate local and national distinctions. Nevertheless the topic of this chapter justifies, indeed requires, that

³¹¹ To wit, Browne: *A Literary History of Persia* (4 vols.) and *Persian Revolution* (see *Elr*, IV, pp. 483–88 for his bibliography and more detail); Nicholson: *The Mathnawī of Jalāl al-Dīn* (8 vols.); Storey: *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*; Arberry: *Classical Persian Literature* and (tr.), *Mystical Poems of Rūmī* (2 vols.). (For a more detailed listing of Arberry's numerous works on, and translations from, Persian literature, see *Elr*, II, pp. 278–79. His translation of the Koran may be considered by some his outstanding achievement, but it had several precedents, whereas his translation of 400 *ghazals* of Rūmī had almost none.)

³¹² The second edition of *The Sociology of Islam*.

³¹³ *The Epic of the Kings: Shāh-nāma, the National Epic of Persia* by Ferdowsi.

³¹⁴ See, for instance, Arberry's autobiographical sketch, published as a preface to his *Mystical Poems of Rūmī*, II, pp. ix–xiii.

the Persian element and its contribution to Islamic culture, particularly, but not exclusively, during its Arab phase, be noted.³¹⁵ To realize the quality and extent of the Persian contribution, we have only to remind ourselves of some of the leading figures who came from Persia. In the first phase there were such luminaries as Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 756), "one of the creators of Arabic literary prose,"³¹⁶ Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767), founder of the Ḥanafī school of religious law; Khwārazmī (d. 847), mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and discoverer of algebra, whose work introduced this science to Europe;³¹⁷ Rhazes (Abū Bakr Rāzī, d. 925), the celebrated physician and philosopher;³¹⁸ Badī' al-Zamān Hamadhānī, the literary scholar and the inventor of the *maqāma* genre of writing (d. 1008); Bīrūnī (d. after 1050), the most outstanding polymath produced in the Islamic world;³¹⁹ Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037), the most influential philosopher of Islam and an encyclopedic genius;³²⁰ and the theologians Ghazālī (d. 1111),³²¹ Zamakhsharī (d. 1143), and Shahrastānī (d. 1158). There were also geographers like Ibn Khurdādhbih (d. 911), Iṣṭakhri (tenth century), and Ibn al-Faqīh (early tenth century); historians like Balādhuri (d. c. 892), Ṭabarī³²² (d. 923), the Herodotus of Islamic history, and Miskawayh (d. 1030);³²³ polymaths like Ibn Qutaiba (d. 887), Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawarī (d. c. 895), and Abū Zayd

³¹⁵ Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, I, p. 446, lists prominent figures of Arabic *adab* up to 965, most of them Persian. Spuler writes, perhaps with some exaggeration, but also reflecting a good deal of truth, "The number of Persians writing Arabic in those centuries was extraordinarily large, and the so-called 'Arabic literature' was largely the work of Persians." *Camb. Hist. of Islam*, I, p. 145. For a detailed account of the Persian scholars who wrote in Arabic, see Saḡā, *Tārīkh-i adabiyāt*, I, pp. 114ff. For a brief account of the contribution of Persian scientists in Islamic times see Elgoud, "Persian Science," pp. 292–317; for more detailed accounts see *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, under individual scholars.

³¹⁶ F. Gabrieli, "Ibn al-Muqaffa," p. 83.

³¹⁷ L. Gardet, "Religion and Culture," p. 596.

³¹⁸ "One of the most eminent physicians, perhaps the greatest clinical doctor of Islam," Anawati, in "Science," p. 769. ³¹⁹ See Spuler, in *Camb. Hist. of Islam*, I, p. 148.

³²⁰ See the series of articles on him in *Elr*, III, pp. 66–110; for his influence on philosophy and science in Europe, see van Riet, "Impact," and Weissner, "Influence," *ibid.*, pp. 104–10.

³²¹ Generally considered the greatest theologian of Islam: see Spuler, *ibid.*, p. 153; he "has sometimes been acclaimed in both East and West the greatest Muslim after Muḥammad," W. M. Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, p. 14.

³²² See Franz Rosenthal's magisterial essay on Ṭabarī's life and work, *History*, I, "Introduction," pp. 5–164.

³²³ On this "Persian nationalist philosopher" and historian who believed that experiences of the past should serve as a lesson and guide for human conduct, see Rosenthal, *Historiography*, p. 122. For a more detailed listing of earlier Persian historians, see Mas'udi, *Murūj*, I, pp. 8–14, who mentions his sources, the majority of them Iranian.

Balkhī (d. 934);³²⁴ scientists like Albumasar (Abu Ma'shar Balkhī, d. 886);³²⁵ and musicians like Ibrāhīm Mawṣilī (d. 804) and his son Ishāq Mawṣilī (d. 850).³²⁶

In the domain of mystical writings alone there were such figures as Hasan Baṣrī,³²⁷ Junayd, Muḥāsibī, Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī (d. 875), Hallāj (d. 922), Kalābādī (d. 994), Sulamī (d. 1020), Qushayrī (d. 1074), and a host of other mystical writers and poets in Persian, far too numerous to mention.³²⁸ The considerable role that Persian Sufis played in spreading Islam among the Turkic peoples in Central Asia and in the subcontinent and part of Indo-China is well known.³²⁹ Islam in China owes much more to Persian Muslim preachers than is normally realized. The number of Persian terms used by Chinese Muslims for ritual and worship, such as *ābdast* "ablution," *bāng-i namāz* "call to prayer," *namāz-i bāmdād* "the morning prayer," *namāz-i pishīn* "the forenoon prayer," etc., attests to the widespread activity of Persian missionaries among the Chinese,³³⁰ as does the fact that the great majority of Muslim manuscripts found in China are Persian.³³¹ Persian trade and missionary activities in the Far East

³²⁴ Abū Hayyān Tawḥīdī considers Jāhīz, Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawarī, and Abū Zayd Balkhī such geniuses that, if all humanity and the jinns (*thaqalayn*) joined in their praise and eulogy and spread their virtues, their character, their learning, and their works, they would not succeed in doing them justice; see Amin, *Duḥa'l Islām*, I, p. 407. Ironically, even the best defender of Arabic culture and opponent of the Shu'ūbiyya (next to Jāhīz) was the historian and littérateur Ibn Qutayba, who was of Persian stock; see Gardet, "Religion and Culture," p. 577.

³²⁵ See Pingree, in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, s.v., on his significance, his Persian nationalism, and his belief in the superiority of Sassanian scientific tradition.

³²⁶ On the derivation of Arab music from Persian music, see Abū'l Faraj Ḥṣāhānī, *Aghānī*, I, p. 98; XVI, 13, *apud* von Kremer, *Kultugeschichtliche Streifzüge*, p. 29.

³²⁷ On his lineage and cultural background see M. Muḥammadī-Malayirī, *Tārīkh u farhang-i Irān*, pp. 21–27.

³²⁸ There is an abundance of literature on Persian Sufi mystics, including a number of monographs on individual Sufis. Bio-bibliographical information about those who are credited with written work may be obtained from Brockelmann, *GAL*; Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*; Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*; Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*; Sezgin, *GAS*; and Šafā, *Tārīkh-i adabiyāt*, s. vv. or index; Gardet, "Religion and Culture," p. 598 and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 437–67. ³²⁹ See n. 301 above.

³³⁰ See the interview with Zeng Yan-Sheng, Professor of Persian at the University of Beijing, in *Kilk*, 60 (1373/1995), p. 182. The point will be evident to anyone who has looked at notices posted in the main mosque in Shian, the chief Islamic city in Han China, which claims some 60,000 Muslims.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183. Persian missionary activity in China in Islamic times has not been researched in depth – a task which calls for scholarly attention. See however J. M. Rogers, Liu Yingsheng and Peter Jackson, *Isenbike Togan*, Morris Rossabi, and Kim Ho-Dong on Perso-Chinese relations during the Islamic periods in *Elr*, V, pp. 431–38, 471–78.

were not confined to China, but extended to Indochina, the Philippines, and Indonesia. An emissary by the Safavid Shah Sulaimān I (r. 1666–94) visited Thailand and its Persian community in 1685 in response to a friendly letter from the enlightened Siamese King Phra Narai to the Shah. The journey and the visit are described in the *Safina-yi Sulaimānī*³³² by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, the secretary to the envoy, who gives an account, among others, of the affairs of the Persian community and their influence (then on the wane) in the Siamese administration, their part in having brought King Phra Narai to the throne, and the fall from favor of a previous Persian minister.³³³ Ibn Baṭṭūta, the famous fourteenth-century Arab traveler, reports that during his visit to China he was entertained in the course of a banquet by musicians who sang in Chinese, Arabic, and Persian. He records a song which was repeated several times on the order of the son of a high official, who was fond of Persian songs. The song has been identified as a line from a lyric by Sa'dī, the well-known thirteenth-century Persian poet.³³⁴

It is illuminating and symbolic of the Persian share in Islamic culture that the authors of the six canonical Sunni collections of Traditions (*ḥadīth*) were, to a man, of Persian stock.³³⁵ Furthermore, some of the most significant schools of Islamic thought owed, if not always their foundations, at least their development and maturity to thinkers of Persian extraction. The Mu'tazilite movement, which dominated intellectual discourse in the ninth century, and Isma'ili

³³² Translated by John O'Kane as *The Ship of Sulaimān*.

³³³ Persia had a busy trade with Chinese ports and owned and operated many ships for the purpose. See G. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean*, pp. 61ff. "A very large village of *po-sse* [i.e., Iranians] is found in the island of Hainan in 748, and in the same year they [*po-sse*] are mentioned along with Brahmins and Malaysians as owners of vessels on the river at Canton," *ibid.*, p. 62; *The History of the T'ang* reports, according to the same source, the sacking of Kwangchou (Canton) by *po-sse* and *Tu-shih* (Arabs) together in 758 and their going back to sea (p. 63).

³³⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūta, *Voyages*, IV, pp. 289–90; 'A. Iqbal, "Shīr-i Sa'dī dar Chīn," pp. 79f.; and M. 'A. Muwahhid's Persian tr., II, p. 303 and n. 14. Cf. C. F. Beckingham, "Ibn Baṭṭūta," pp. 4–6.

³³⁵ These were Muḥammad b. Ismā'il of Bukhara, Abū'l Ḥasan Muslim of Nishāpūr, Ibn Māja of Qazvīn, Abū Dāwūd Sijistānī, Tirmidhī, and Nasā'ī; see Gardet, "Religion and Culture," p. 591; Brockelmann, *GAL*, s.v.; and Šafā, *Tārīkh-i adabiyāt*, I, p. 74. Goldziher is no doubt right in not agreeing totally with Lagarde's exaggerated view, when he writes: "It would be superfluous to mention the many names whose very sound is evidence of the debt Arabic grammar and lexicology owe to non-Arabs. Even if we do not entirely accept Paul de Lagarde's statement that 'of the Muslims who achieved anything in scholarship none was a Semite' (*Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, p. 8, n. 4), it can certainly be said that the Arabs lagged considerably behind the non-Arabs in the specifically religious studies and in the studies concerned with the knowledge of the Arabic language" (*Muslim Studies*, I, p. 105).

theology, which was widely spread in the tenth, are cases in point. "The Isma'ili movement in its historically recognizable form," writes Wilferd Madelung, "was born in Persia and initially spread from there" (*Religious Trends*, p. 93). It grew to become the embodiment of the intellectual development in the tenth century of Shi'ite thinking, as Franz Rosenthal remarks: "The intellectual development of the tenth century led to the triumph of a type of thinking which found its most characteristic expression in Isma'ilism but, as a religion of the educated, probably extended far beyond the active adherents of the political theories of the extremist Šī'ah. In the series of great Muslim world histories, that type of thinking is best represented by the *Tajārib al-umam* of the Persian nationalist philosopher Miskawayh" (*Historiography*, p. 122).³³⁶

Contrary to an earlier view ascribing the rise of Shi'ism to Persia, it has become increasingly evident that Shi'ism had its beginnings among the Arabs. Nevertheless, it is among the Persians that Imami Shi'ism flourished. The ninth and tenth centuries may be considered the Golden Age of Shi'ite writing, when the Nawbakhtis, Kulayni, Ibn Bāwayh, and Shaikh Ṣadūq were compiling Shi'ite Traditions and arguing the legitimacy of their faith.³³⁷

It may be mentioned in passing that Persia was the only country that produced popular passion plays (*ta'ziya*), probably from the late Safavid period.³³⁸ The bulk of them are in verse, which are chanted, and deal with the martyrdom of Shi'ite imams and saints, particularly Ḥusayn, the third imam, and his family and followers at Karbalā'. They are not dissimilar to medieval passion plays in the West and are performed both in urban centers and by itinerant groups in rural areas. The literary quality of the verses is low, however.

Because nearly all Sassanian written works have disappeared, we cannot clearly substantiate all theories on the adoption of Sassanian traditions by the Shi'ites; most often we must be guided by circumstantial evidence. For instance, Claude Cahen was inclined to conclude that *futuwwa* and *'ayyārī*, ethical and religious codes of conduct and affiliation that flourished in medieval Persia and Anatolia, had

their roots in Sassanian Iran.³³⁹ I have surmised that mourning rituals among the Shi'ites may have had a precedent in pre-Islamic mourning rites for the martyrdom of Siyāvash.³⁴⁰ Other instances have been mentioned earlier (pp. 30ff.).³⁴¹

Considering the part of Persians in developing Islamic civilization, it is even possible from the Persian point of view to classify the Arabic-language phase of Islamic civilization in Persia, before the rise of the Samanids in the tenth century, as an example of historical "pseudomorphosis," a term borrowed from geology by Oswald Spengler:

In a rock-stratum, are embedded crystals of a mineral. Clefs and cracks occur, water filters in, and the crystals are gradually washed out so that in due course only their hollow mould remains. Then come volcanic outbursts which explode the mountain; molten masses pour in, stiffen, and crystallize out in their turn. But these are not free to do so in their own special forms. They must fill up the spaces that they find available. Thus there arise distorted forms, crystals whose inner structure contradict their external shape, stones of one kind presenting the appearance of stones of another kind. The mineralogists call this phenomenon Pseudomorphosis. (*The Decline of the West*, II, p. 189-90)

For example, we might say that for two hundred years after the introduction of Islam, Persians channeled what welled up from the depths of their inner beings into molds that were not theirs but that had been imposed on them as a consequence of military defeat and the adoption of a new religion and a foreign language. Such an assumption would have been by no means justified had the Persians failed to realize a "renaissance" in the tenth century and to generate a distinct cultural agenda based on their own traditions, even though within the framework of Islam.³⁴²

³³⁹ See Cahen, "Economy, Society, Institutions," p. 530 and in *Elr*, III, p. 159, under "Ayyārī."

³⁴⁰ E. Yarshater, "Ta'zieh," pp. 88-95. See also Sh. Miskūb, *Sūg-i Siyāvash*, pp. 82ff., who was the first to draw attention to the continuation of the pre-Islamic myth in an Islamic guise.

³⁴¹ B. Spuler briefly refers to the link between the concept of the Iranian *x'arnah* (*farra*) and the divine light that the Shi'ites believe dwells in the Imams ("Iran: the Persistent Heritage," p. 175), a link discussed at length by H. Corbin (see above, pp. 84-85); cf. Amir-Moezzi, *Early Shi'ism*, pp. 29ff., for the "light" out of which the Imams and Impeccables (*ma'sūms*) are created.

³⁴² Pseudomorphosis may in fact be considered the theme of Muḥammadī's *Tārīkh u farhang*, in which a number of data are brought to bear on his claim that Arabization (*ta'rib*) of Persian appellations and the bestowal of Arabic names and affiliations on *mawālī* have tended to obscure, except in obvious cases, the creative contribution of the Persians in the nurturing of Islamic civilization (pp. 8ff.); even accounts of early historical events were Arabicized and largely confined to what

³³⁶ See Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 37. For the contribution of the Isma'ilis to Islamic thought and some prominent Persian Isma'ilis see W. Madelung, *Religious Trends*, pp. 93-105, and Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, pp. 212ff., 234ff.; see also Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 84-88.

³³⁷ On the Buyid era being the flourishing period of Shi'ite thought, both Imami and Isma'ili, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, p. 36-37; on Buyids as patrons of culture, see von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 144.

³³⁸ Cf. Gardet "Religion and Culture," p. 586. For various aspects of these plays, see Chelkowski, *Ta'zieh*.

It must be recognized that in the formation of Islamic civilization Arabia served as a catalyst, free as it was from the fetters of aged bureaucratic entanglement and endowed with courage and fighting vigor. The Arabs shattered all the political, religious, and social barriers that had stood in the way of fruitful cooperation among Middle Eastern peoples, who, indeed, as Toynbee pointed out, had come together first under the Achaemenids and had cooperated in the building of a large empire. The Arabs gave the nascent civilization a universal religion, a universal language, and effective political leadership for two or three centuries. Then they began to fade away as creative directors of that civilization. The work of developing it fell to peoples who had enjoyed longer and more advanced traditions of culture: Syrians, Mesopotamians, Arameans (Syriac speakers), Egyptians, Andalusians, Turks, Indians, and in the forefront, as we have seen, Persians.³⁴³

Having played their part in developing and enriching Islamic civilization during its Arabic phase, the Persians then began to recover their cultural identity, focusing their attention chiefly on the creation and development of a new mode of Islamic culture with deep roots in Iranian consciousness.³⁴⁴ From the early ninth century, when the Tahirids were established as governors of Khurasan, Persian territories assumed *de facto* independence, paying only nominal allegiance to the caliphs. They were governed sometimes by Iranian rulers, more often by Turks, but always according to a cultural and administrative structure that had been developed by the Samanids on the basis of both local traditions and the Abbasid pattern, itself largely shaped on the Sassanian model.³⁴⁵

Political autonomy heralded the rise of a culture of unprecedented vitality and creative energy, based on the revival, or rather the reemployment,³⁴⁶ of Persian as the medium of literary expression. With this restoration, the Persians finally came into their own and returned to modes of expression more congenial to their spirit. Their literary

happened to the Arab inhabitants or tribes in the conquered lands (pp. 37–38). On the inconclusiveness of attributing Arab ethnicity to people bearing Arab names, see also Daniel, *Khurasan*, pp. 33ff. ³⁴³ Cf. Cahen, "Points de vue," pp. 573–74.

³⁴⁴ It is interesting to note, as B. Spuler has pointed out ("Iran: the Persistent Heritage," p. 176), that in Islamic Persia most of the ruling houses, even the Saljuqs, attempted to trace their origins to pre-Islamic Iranian kings and not to Islamic saints or the Prophet (the Safavids being an exception).

³⁴⁵ Cf. Amin, *Duḥā' l-Islām*, I, pp. 166ff.; Levy, "Persia and the Arabs," pp. 66f.; Watt, *Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 169–70. The administrative model developed by the Samanids continued in its basic form in Persia and central Asia well into the nineteenth century. See Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, pp. 426–27 on Central Asia. ³⁴⁶ See Muḥammadī, "Chiginegi-yi intiqāl."

men revived the epic genre, wrote narrative *mathnawīs*, produced lyric *ghazals*, and composed *rubāīs* in abundance. The orientation basic to this culture was already manifest in Firdausī's *Shāhnāmeḥ*, an epic poem of Iranian legend and history that was both the symptom and the instrument of growing national self-awareness. In no other part of the Islamic world did attachment to national traditions, and resistance to the obliteration of these traditions, exhibit such strong roots as in Persia, more particularly in Khurasan and Transoxania.³⁴⁷ Numerous revolts under the earlier caliphs, the challenging religious movements before and after the murder of Abū Muslim, the Shu'ūbī movement, and finally the emergence of semi-autonomous and autonomous local dynasties in Persia all testify to an inner dynamic energy that sought expression, albeit mostly within the Islamic orbit. The *Shāhnāmeḥ* articulated this deep-rooted sense of a distinct tradition and crystallized national sentiments that had remained vague, though potent. In time it became a paradigm for Persian patriotism and a major focus of national identity. Equipped with a new faith and a new social order, the Persians rose from the ashes of their past with fresh vigor and began a new phase of their cultural history.

A new poetry, rooted in Sassanian traditions but adapted to the Arabic scheme of meters and rhyme, began to blossom.³⁴⁸ In contrast to scenes of the desert, it was geared to the courtly atmosphere of luxurious palaces. This poetry was characterized by a genuine delight in the softer manifestations of nature: flowers and trees, clouds, rain and snow, changes of hues and shapes with the changes of the seasons. In addition, a concept of beauty emanating from an idealized maiden, or more often a youth, skilled in the arts of music and companionship, as well as joyous descriptions of wine and its liberating effects were typical of this poetry. Songs, ballads and odes were to be sung or chanted to the accompaniment of lyre, viol, or lute. Usually these elements were evoked in the preambles to odes in praise of patrons, exalting their bravery, munificence, fighting prowess, triumphs in battle, and splendor at banquets. Narrative epics were also composed about the exploits of ancient heroes within a framework of Persian myth and legendary history.

Such works typified the literature patronized by the Samanids in the tenth century, the formative period of Persian literature after the

³⁴⁷ See the comparison made in this respect with Egypt, Syria, and Iraq by Spuler, "Iran: the Persistent Heritage," pp. 168ff. and with Turkey by de Planhol, *Les Nations du Prophète*, pp. 481ff.).

³⁴⁸ For the debt of early Persian literature to Arabic literature see Gabrieli, "Literary Tendencies," pp. 97ff., and Elwell-Sutton in *EIr*, II, pp. 233–37.

Islamic conquest. Naturally the dominant themes and imagery did not remain static but were gradually modified by medieval Persian poets. The prevailing feeling of delight in terrestrial pleasures gradually evolved into a more contemplative, even melancholy, mood. As the idealized beloved became more distant and abstract, yet inspiring profound emotion, the lover became more wretched, prepared to yield everything, including his hope of heaven, for a moment of union with the beloved or even for a kind word. The lover/poet partook of wine in order to find at least momentary respite from the cares of the world – a constant theme of Persian lyrics. As the poet brooded on the fickleness of fate and the inability of man to change or challenge his destiny, he suffered a sense of abandonment, and his mind was drawn to the emancipating power of the spiritual life. A combination of serene submission to the will of God and a detachment nourished by disdain for worldly pleasures thus permeated Persian lyric poetry of this period (twelfth to fourteenth centuries).

Beginning in about the eleventh century, on the one hand, the growing adoption of Ash'arite theology and an accelerated shift to a spirit of dogmatic assertions, exemplified by Ghazālī (d. 1111), and, on the other, the imposition by Turkish rulers of Persia (the Ghaznavids, Saljuqs, Khwarazmshahs, and others) of a narrower orthodoxy stimulated the Persian poets to seek an outlet in a more tolerant, less formal, and increasingly spiritual and pantheistic view of the world, embodied in mystical approach. Mysticism, which had been nourished by the devotional piety of some earlier Sufis, as well as by lingering traces of pre-Islamic Gnostic traditions, evolved into a general mode of thought, enriching Persian poetry and providing an alternative to the rigidity of the formal *Shari'a*. As a result, within the parameters of the Islamic faith there developed a new outlook characterized by a blend of doctrinal tolerance and mild skepticism toward organized religion, favoring devotional renunciation of terrestrial concerns and embracing the mystical love of the divine.

Persian culture was soon equally manifest in a pervasive appreciation of beauty and elegance, whether in poetry or painting, architecture or the decorative arts. The Persian language, spreading to India, Anatolia, and the Turkic regions of Central Asia as far as Sinkiang, became the prevailing language of literature and administration. As F. Gabrieli notes, the appearance of Persian literature from the ninth century was

Important not only for the history of Iran, which thus reaffirmed its national individuality, at least linguistically, but also for the whole Muslim civilization . . . The rapid and splendid blooming of this second Islamic literature is inter-

esting, not only from a literary point of view, but also from the social and religious one, for it breaks for the first time the close bond between Arabism and Islam and opens new possibilities of spiritual affirmation to non-Arabic Muslim peoples. ("Literary Tendencies," p. 97)

By the thirteenth century, the *ghazal* embodying the ambivalence between mundane and divine love was fully developed in the poems of Rūmī (d. 1273) and Iraqī (d. 1289); nevertheless, Sa'dī (d. 1282), in the incomparable ease, elegance, and vivacity of his *ghazals* continued to celebrate the traditional ideals of human beauty and the joys and pains of love. The most accomplished, balanced, and refined instance of Persian lyric poetry encompassing a description of raptures of love, adoration of beauty, exaltation of wine and intoxication, together with wise counsel and moral precepts imbued with mild mystical sentiments, philosophical reflections and contemplative musings, is found in the poems of Hafiz (d. 1389), with whom Persian poetry reached its highest point. An unsurpassed master of irony, he heightens the effect of his *ghazals* by his satirical wit and his constant ridicule of religious hypocrisy and worldly pseudo-Sufism.

There was, however, one more period of development before a definitive decline in the seventeenth century. Under the Timurids the repertoire of poetic imagery was expanded by the introduction of motifs drawn from daily experience, including subtle similes between concrete phenomena and abstract ideas. This literary mode reached its full flowering in the Safavid period in Persia and also in Mughal India. Although the *ghazals* were neither as lucid nor as elegantly musical as those of earlier periods, and their language, which approached colloquial usage, was less eloquent, single lines often provided gems of brilliantly conceived, if sometimes far-fetched, poetic ideas. This mode of lyric poetry, called the Indian style, found many masters in the seventeenth century and continued among the poets of the Mughal court and elsewhere in the subcontinent as well as in Ottoman Anatolia and Central Asia even after the Persian poets chose to return to the "purer" traditional language and motifs and the more accessible images of earlier classics.

New schools of art also began to develop. The mosques and palaces, painting and calligraphy, ceramics, metalwork, and textiles all reached new heights of excellence.

The distinction of Perso-Islamic culture from the norms of the Arab-Islamic phase is manifested not only in art and literature but also in historiography and in the conception of historical events. Humphreys, commenting on the difference, remarks:

We should not think of the difference between the two [the Arabic and Persian historiography of the Middle Period] as merely linguistic. To a great extent each language enshrines a specific cultural tradition almost from the beginning. Persian historians draw far more heavily than their Arabic-writing counterparts on the themes of neo-Sassanian culture, not only for rhetorical ornament or exemplary tales, but to form the underlying conceptual paradigms and narrative patterns of their accounts. Likewise, the better Persian writers seem more interested in contriving a fully integrated narrative than do their Arabic counterparts, at least on the surface level. That is, rather than presenting a series of discrete events, they portray (to follow Aristotle's language) a single action, a unified story leading up to clear dramatic resolution. We might attribute this dramatic coherence to an effort by Persian historians to apply the plot-lines and characterizations which they found in the epic poetry of Firdausi (d. 411/1020) and his successors to the events and persons which filled their own writings, but at present such statements can only be speculation.³⁴⁹

The roster of great figures who emerged during the Persian phase in itself attests to the brilliance of its culture: apart from those already mentioned,³⁵⁰ one may cite poets like Nāṣir-i Khusrau (d. 1060), Khayyām (d. 1132), Nizāmī (d. 1203), Amīr Khusrau of Delhi (d. 1325),³⁵¹ Šā'ib (d. 1669) and Iqbal of Lahore (d. 1938),³⁵² all great masters of literary creation, though of different sensibilities and styles; historians like Bayhaqī (d. 1077), Juvaynī (d. 1283), Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), Mustawfī (d. 1349), and Iskander Bēg Turkmān (d. c. 1627);³⁵³ mathematician-astronomers like 'Umar Khayyām, Naṣir al-Dīn Tūsī (d. 1274), Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jamshīd Kāshānī (d. 1437);³⁵⁴ Sufi leaders like Abu'l-Ḥasan Kharāqānī (d. 1033), Abū Sa'īd Abī'l-Khayr (d. 1049), 'Alī b. 'Uthmān Hujwīrī (d. c. 1075), 'Abd-Allāh Anṣārī (d. 1089), Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221), Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1256), 'Attār (d. 1273), and Shah Nī'mat-Allah Walī (d. c. 1427); exegetes like Abū Bakr Sūrābādī (eleventh century); 'Imād al-Dīn Shahfūr (eleventh century); Abu'l-Faḍl Maybudī (twelfth century);³⁵⁵

³⁴⁹ *Islamic History*, pp. 129–130; cf. pp. 134ff. on the historian Bayhaqī, whom Humphreys singles out as a representative of Persian historiography at its best. See also Waldman, *Toward a Theory*, esp. pp. 57ff. ³⁵⁰ See pp. 91–93 above.

³⁵¹ On this poet see A. J. Arberry, "The Art of Ḥafiz," in *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, pp. 350–58.

³⁵² Iqbal was an Urdu-speaker and an ardent proponent of Muslim solidarity and cultural renovation. He was inspired by Rūmī and wrote his best poetry in Persian. See Annemarie Schimmel, "Iqbal's Persian Poetry," p. 422–27.

³⁵³ On Iskandar's *Ālam-ārā* and "its judicious accuracy, its psychological perceptiveness, and the broad interest it manifests in the ramification of the events it traces," and its being a mine of social information on the time, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, III, p. 42.

³⁵⁴ For an account of the scientific contributions of these three scholars see *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, s.vv.

³⁵⁵ Louis Gardet, in discussing the commentaries on the Koran, in "Religion and

Abu'l-Futuḥ Rāzī (d. c. 1131), philosophers like Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191), Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631), and Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā, d. 1640); painters like Bihzād (d. 1536) and Riḍā 'Abbāsī (d. 1634); calligraphers like 'Alī Riḍā 'Abbāsī (d. 1536), Mīr 'Imād (d. 1615), and Darvīsh (d. 1771); and a host of architects, artists, woodworkers, metalworkers, glassmakers, and bookbinders of great talent submerged in the customary anonymity of artistic craftsmen.

Having focused on the positive achievements, or the credit side, of Persia in the Islamic world, it is only fair to make sure that we do not neglect the debit side. Persia could be blamed, if indeed societies could be blamed for the courses they choose or appear to choose, for having been a hotbed of dissension and sectarianism surpassed only by lower Iraq, Kūfa in particular, where Arabs, Persians, and Aramean elements³⁵⁶ mingled. This state of affairs has prompted the cynical remark that the Persians never became truly Muslim at heart. The ambivalence of many modern educated, nationalist-minded Persians toward Islam, conceived as an Arab religion, may encourage this assumption. Nevertheless, recent events in Persia and the revival of fundamentalist rhetoric may serve as a sobering reminder that the Persian population has been and remains profoundly committed to the religious mindset, as its Middle Eastern heritage would lead us to expect. Let us not forget, too, that the exaltation of religious feelings reaches an exceptionally high level in some Persian mystical poetry and prayers.

We may also take note of a common criticism by Sunni authors that the coercive measures adopted by the Safavid Shah Isma'īl to convert his domain to Shi'ism at the beginning of the sixteenth century contributed to a religious schism within the body of Islam of a profundity that no other seditious or sectarian movement had succeeded in achieving; it created a barrier of creed in the very center of the Islamic world. This split appears to have contributed to the relative cultural barrenness of Central Asia between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, in that it was cut off from its close neighbor and the source of much of its culture, Persia, as well as from the main body

Culture," pp. 589–90, limits himself actually to four scholars, "who were to become accepted as authorities;" they are all of Iranian extraction: Ṭabarī (d. 923), Zamaksharī (d. 1144), Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1210), and Bayḍawī (d. 1286 or 1291). On Persians achieving distinction in all branches of learning, even in the science of Arab genealogies (*ansāb*), see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, pp. 105, 109, 175, 186.

³⁵⁶ See Watt, *Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 170.

of the Muslim community.³⁵⁷ Although the Safavid state warded off Ottoman attacks, defeated Uzbek inroads, and finally achieved, almost inadvertently, Persian national unity and a Persian nation-state, the legacy of its extremism and an abusive attitude toward most of the leading figures of early Islam has proved a stumbling-block to reconciliation and unity within the Islamic world. I have already alluded to the boastful pride and Shu'ūbī sentiments of early Persians and the unforgiving attitude of many modern Persian intellectuals toward the Arab conquest. (See above, pp. 12f., for the intolerance of the Abbasid caliphs, modeled on the attitude of Sassanian monarchs.)

We may also mention here the tendency to excessive mourning for the Shi'ite martyrs, which has been criticized by many reformers and modern thinkers as both unbecoming and detracting from urgent tasks at hand.³⁵⁸ Manifestations include not only the *ta'ziya* plays, already mentioned, but also *rawḍa-khwānī*, that is, chanting of the passions of the Shi'ite martyrs before audiences who respond with lamentation, weeping, and beating their foreheads; and processions of believers flagellating and otherwise wounding themselves in frenzies of penance.

Many people, including Persians, have written on the Persian character; assessments range from exaggerated self-glorification, epitomized in a hemistich by Firdausi, "virtues are confined to Persians"³⁵⁹ (now quoted more often in jest than seriously), to utterly self-deprecating comments on supposed Persian cowardice, duplicity, servility, emotionalism, suspiciousness, and lack of industry.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ See Spuler, "Central Asia," pp. 468–70; Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, p. 426; Toynbee, *A Study of History*, I, p. 392. Cf. V. Minorsky, "Iran: Opposition, Martyrdom, and Revolt," pp. 194ff., who points out the importance of the Safavids, nonetheless, for Persian survival vis-à-vis the Ottomans and the Uzbeks. For a rigorous criticism of the fanatical, anti-Sufi policy of the Safavids, see Muḥammad Qazvīnī's evaluation in a letter cited by Browne, *Literary History*, IV, pp. 26–28; this is also quoted by Toynbee, I, pp. 393f., who adds his own detailed criticism.

³⁵⁸ See A. Kasravi, *Shi'igari*; cf. the biting satires by Īraj (d. 1925) in his *Divān*, ed. M. Mahjūb, pp. 173, 177, 202. Cf. also the prohibition of *qamazani* (wounding oneself on the forehead and skull and shedding one's blood in mourning for Ḥusayn, the third imam) by both Reza Shah and the Islamic Republic authorities.

³⁵⁹ "Hunar nazd-i Irāniān ast u bas."

³⁶⁰ James Morrier's *Haji Baba* purports to illustrate some of the characteristic ways and manners of the Persians in the early Qajar period. Mīrzā Aqā Khān Kirmānī, an ardent reformist executed by the order of Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shah in July 1896, paints a bleak picture of Persian society in the Qajar period, as suffering from ignorance, superstition, the rapacity of its clergy, and the despotic oppression of its rulers (*Seh maktūb*, pp. 62ff.). Jamāl-zādeh's *Khulqīyāt-i mā irānīyān* (The Character of Us Persians), a rather disorganized and poorly referenced compilation of quotations mostly from foreign writers, is an example of the Persians writing with a vengeance about their blemishes and moral failure, although Jamāl-zādeh, in an attempt to balance the content, also quotes some good reports about his com-

Although Persians are not the only candidates for this happy combination of virtues, there is one trait that has developed so strongly among them, particularly since the mid nineteenth century, that it may be called a "national ailment," that is, the tendency to see, with a pervasive suspicion of the obvious, the conspiratorial hand of some foreign agent (mostly the British and now increasingly the Americans) in all modern and current events, from the rise of Reza Shah to the advent of Khomeyni, or even the dismissal of an errand boy in a second-hand bookshop! The jesting attribution of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn and the Mongol invasion of Persia to the machinations of the British is meant by a few nonbelievers to underscore the absurdity of this mode of thinking.³⁶¹

The Persian presence in the modern Muslim world

What, then, can be said about the presence of Persia in the modern Muslim community? One indubitable fact, of course, is that the ubiquitous presence of the West throughout the Islamic world has severely diminished the impact of any single component of this world. Nonetheless, within the limited range of possibilities, Persia may claim recognition for its impact on the political, intellectual, and religious directions of the Islamic society. In the seventeenth century the philosophical school of Isfahan, to which Henry Corbin and some of his students have paid proper attention, produced its major figure, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī. Influenced by him, Shaikh Aḥmad of Aḥsā (d. 1826) founded in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century a new school of Shi'ite thought, the Shaikhī school, which opened the way for the reformist Bābī movement. The latter eventually broke away from Islam and declared a new divine dispensation. The Bābī movement in turn gave rise to the Bahā'ī faith, the followers of which can now be found in most parts of the world.

In the political sphere we may mention Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, a native of Asadābād in the Hamadān province in western Persia; he was the first influential modern thinker and activist to call attention to the ills of Muslim society and its weaknesses vis-à-vis the Western powers, and to advocate pan-Islamism. His impact on Islamic countries, particularly Egypt and Persia, was considerable.³⁶²

patriots. Publication of the book earned the author the displeasure of ardent nationalists and the Persian government.

³⁶¹ See an excellent treatment of this "conspiracy theory" by Aḥmad Ashraf, in *Elr*, VI, pp. 138–47.

³⁶² See Nikki Keddie, "Afghānī," pp. 481–86; Goldziher in *EF*, II, pp. 416–19, for details of Jamāl al-Dīn's thought, activities, and influence; cf. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 175; Hourani, *History*, p. 307.

Muḥammad Muṣaddiq was another seminal figure whose passionate anti-imperialist nationalism had an unmistakable impact on other Middle Eastern countries, including Egypt and Libya. He was the first Middle Eastern statesman to nationalize, in 1950, the oil industry, and to raise the banner of opposition against economic exploitation by imperial powers. He served in many ways as the model for other Middle Eastern nationalist leaders, including Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir. Finally, the Islamic radicalism following the 1979 Persian revolution has exerted an influence not only in the Middle East and north Africa but even in some Asian republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

At a time when all manner of cures to the abiding ills of the Islamic lands, from benign neglect to autocratic paternalism to old-fashioned liberalism to half-baked socialism to aggressive nationalism have been and are being tried, Persia too has adopted a number of approaches to solving its problems and putting its house in order. After the slumbering indifference that characterized most of the Qajar period (1779–1921), political constitutionalism was introduced in 1905–12, but it soon deteriorated into near anarchy under Aḥmad Shah, the last Qajar king (r. 1909–25). Reza Khan (later Reza Shah), who took over the state effectively in 1921 and was proclaimed Shah in 1925, practiced progressive, though iron-fisted, autocracy to pacify and modernize Persia rapidly. After he was forced by the Allied powers to abdicate in 1941, a period of liberal democracy ensued, culminating in Moṣaddiq's nationalization of the oil industry. The demise of Moṣaddiq's government in 1953 heralded a period of absolutism under Moḥammad Reza Shah, who attempted to modernize Persian society in alignment with the West, the United States in particular. The regime misread the aspirations of the people, however, and offended national pride by presenting itself as a client of the United States and subservient to its interests. The result was the revolution of 1979, in which the privileged and the Western-oriented classes were swept aside and the way opened for religious radicalism and a fundamentalist rule of perceived Shi'ite orthodoxy.

As Islamic countries share many basic problems, hopes, and aspirations, any movement in any Muslim nation that offers even a partial or tentative response to these problems is bound to have repercussions among other Islamic societies. Persia may not be credited with success in its experiments, but it cannot be accused of not having tried. To paraphrase the remark of the great inventor Thomas Edison, when confronted with yet another failure after ninety-nine experi-

ments, we may say that no efforts have been wasted, for now we know which solutions will not work.

Now that we have considered the past and the present, logic requires that we end with a word about the future. I am tempted to repeat a remark by Roman Jakobson, the celebrated linguist, who was asked what he thought about the future of Yiddish. He reportedly said, "I do not *think* about Yiddish, I *worry*." In a more serious vein, I would say in brief that Persian society, in the course of its long history, has shown enormous adaptability. At times it even looked as if it had abdicated its distinctive character and was being absorbed into another culture. One such phase occurred, one may speculate, in the pre-Median times under Mesopotamian and Elamite suzerainty. Another came about with the conquest of Alexander, when Persia was drawn into the Hellenistic orbit; and a third when Persia succumbed to the Arab Muslim armies. A fourth manifested itself during the long centuries when Persia was overrun and ruled by Turkic, Mongol, and Tatar invaders from the North-East. The reemergence of the Persian way of life and culture after each period of eclipse proves that the essence of the culture had not been lost, only veiled. Indeed, durability, despite many vicissitudes, has been one of the main features of Persian cultural history. At present, Persia, like the rest of the Old World, lives in the shadow of Western civilization and under the domination of Western technology. It is too soon to predict whether or not Persia will once more regain its cultural independence and distinctiveness. No doubt that was one of the idealistic aims of the recent revolution.

Whatever the future may have in store, I cannot refrain from evoking the image of a brave and energetic youth whose heroic ventures won him fame and fortune; who then matured and mellowed into a more thoughtful and contemplative individual; and who wrote exquisite lines on beauty and wisdom, the pleasures of love, the pains of separation, and the transience of life. Eventually he reached an age of failing strength and declining powers, when he could find solace only in the remembrance of his past. But who can deny hope for rejuvenation?

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2 · Persian scientists in the Islamic world: astronomy from Maragha to Samarqand

GEORGE SALIBA
Columbia University

Introduction

Given the general theme of the conference on which this volume is based, namely "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World," I find it very difficult to isolate the Persian elements in the general scientific production of the medieval Islamic world. The difficulty stems from the use of the term "Persian." For if this term is used linguistically, then it will be absurd to speak of the production of such famous encyclopedic scientists as Abū al-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048) who wrote almost exclusively in Arabic, and very little in Persian, if at all. In addition, he explicitly states in his most authoritative work on pharmacology that he preferred to use Arabic for scientific discourse and to leave Persian to the poets and the story tellers, presumably meaning the historians. In other instances, as with the equally famous eclectic writer Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), we would have to speak of only some aspects of his scientific works and leave out the others, which were written in Arabic. This is also true of Avicenna (d. 1037) and others.

If, on the other hand, the term "Persian" is used as an ethnic term, then the history of Persian science will become totally chaotic, and we shall embark on an endless pursuit to try to determine the genealogy of each medieval scientist. That is not an easily achievable task when we remember that medieval Islamic society was probably one of the most thorough melting pots of all times where families intermarried quite freely across ethnic and class barriers, and very frequently moved from one city to another, thereby crossing geographical and even linguistic borders. Think, for example, of such scientists as Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārazmī (fl. 830), Muḥammad b. Zakarīya al-Rāzī (d. 932), and Abū al-Wafā' al-Būzjānī (d. 997), to name only three who obviously hailed from what is now Persia, and who were then well within the Persian sphere of linguistic domain,

and yet produced their scientific work in Baghdād, where the language of their milieu and of their writings was definitely Arabic. There is no doubt that such scientists must have added the delightful color of their background to the social life in Baghdād, but no one would dispute that the scientific culture of Baghdād in which they worked was definitely an Arabic culture.

Finally, despite the fact that one could arguably find an increasing number of Persian texts in later times in various scientific disciplines, it is still difficult to group such texts under a thematic structure in which one could point to such scientific texts and say that there was an indigenous Persian scientific production which was independent of the contemporary Arabic production. Whatever Persian texts one finds in such groups, one can argue that they were either translated from Arabic or were in large part inspired by Arabic.

Yet, in the remaining part of this chapter I will defend the position that there is some sense in talking about "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World" with special reference to astronomy. I will argue that when we use the term "Persian" in its linguistic sense, it is then possible to distinguish important directions in the development of astronomical research that can be referred to as "Persian." To illustrate this point, I will focus on the activities in two famous medieval observatories, which were established well within the Persian linguistic cultural domain, namely the Marāgha observatory, founded in 1259, in northwest modern Iran, and Ulugh Beg's observatory, which was founded around 1420 in Samarqand, in modern Uzbekistan. I will also argue that despite the patrimonial relationship between these two observatories the directions of astronomical research undertaken at both places were quite different in substance.

Before considering the distinctive features of Persian astronomy, I must establish the general framework of the preceding and contemporary Arabic astronomy for two main reasons: First, we shall soon see that the major trends which we shall refer to as trends in Persian astronomy were either inspired by original Arabic works or were simple translations of such works. Second, we shall also note that these major trends in Persian astronomy can only be understood against the general background of Arabic astronomy, and cannot be adequately appreciated on their own.

The background of Arabic astronomy

Like its Greek counterpart, Arabic astronomy can be perceived as having developed along the lines of one or more of the four main

astronomical traditions, which were represented by books written by the most famous Greek astronomer, namely Claudius Ptolemaeus (fl. c. 150). There was the tradition represented by the model of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, in which one discussed the observational basis of theoretical astronomy, and gave some directions for the practical astronomical applications such as the determination of planetary positions for specific times. This tradition was revived¹ during Islamic times and continued throughout the Middle Ages to produce works that were either inspired by the *Almagest*, thus using it as a topic of commentary, or treated individual theoretical problems raised by the *Almagest*. I am here thinking of the various commentaries on the *Almagest*, called *sharḥ*, *tafsīr*, *talkhīṣ*, *tahrīr*, *islāḥ*, and the like,² and the various works of Thābit b. Qurrah (d. 901) and his generation which dealt with specific topics raised in the *Almagest*.³ I am also thinking of the various works on trigonometry, such as the early works on the *Qibla* determination, which brought the whole field of trigonometry to a much higher order of sophistication than that of the *Almagest*. In this regard I can mention the works of Ḥabash al-Ḥāsib (c. 850), al-Nairīzī (d. 922/3), al-Battānī (c. 929), Abū al-Wafā' al-Buzjānī (d. 997), Ibn 'Irāq (c. 1000) and others.⁴ The whole tradition of theoretical mathematical projections, rooted in such works as Ptolemy's *Planisphaerium*, dealing with the theory of astrolabe projections among other things,⁵ and which will not be discussed in this chapter, also contributed in its own way to the rise of sophisticated trigonometric techniques.

Then there was the model of Ptolemy's *Planetary Hypotheses*, in

¹ As far as I know, there are no Syriac, Pahlavi, or Sanskrit sources that dealt with this subject prior to Islamic times. There are references to the *Almagest* in some Syriac sources, but those references could indicate the Greek text rather than the nonextant Syriac texts. In fact there is evidence that no translations of the *Almagest* were ever made into Syriac. See, e.g., G. Saliba, "Translation and Translators, Islamic," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, XII (New York: Scribner, 1989), pp. 127-33.

² For a discussion of the available manuscripts of such works, see F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, VI (Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 88-94.

³ For the astronomical works of Thābit Ibn Qurrah, see Régis Morelon, *Œuvres d'astronomie* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1987).

⁴ Each of these authors wrote a commentary on the *Almagest*, or produced extensive treatises dealing with the trigonometric subjects dealt with in the *Almagest*, or, as in the case of Ḥabash and Battānī, produced *zīj*es in which they used the new trigonometry rather than the one used in the *Almagest*. For further identifications and a more complete list of their works see Heinrich Suter, *Die Mathematiker und Astronomen der Araber und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900; New York: Johnson Reprint corp., 1972), *passim*.

⁵ See, for example, Christoph Anagnostakis, "The Arabic Version of Ptolemy's *Planisphaerium*," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1984.

which one attempted to represent the celestial spheres as physical bodies, in order to account for the various motions of the planets as resulting from the motions of these physical spheres. This tradition overlapped greatly with that of the *Almagest*. And because of this overlapping the early attempts to combine the two traditions produced during Islamic times serious theoretical problems which later on became the main subject-matter of a new type of astronomical texts called *Hay'a* texts. The term *Hay'a* ("configuration," "form," "shape") is not of Greek origin, and can best be translated as "cosmography." In such texts, the problems, which were embodied in both the Ptolemaic *Almagest* and the *Planetary Hypothesis*, were critically dealt with and at times solved with most admirable ingenuity. In fact, as we shall soon see, the most original work done in medieval Arabic astronomy was to be found in these *Hay'a* texts.

There was also the tradition of the Ptolemaic *Handy Tables*, as they were reworked by Theon of Alexandria (second half of the fourth century), in which very elaborate tables were produced for the sole purpose of computing the planetary positions for any given time. This tradition was mainly represented by the hundreds of texts written before and during Islamic medieval times, almost all carrying in their titles the Pahlavi term *Zik*(ig), which was later arabized as *Zīj*.⁶

Finally, there was the tradition of the *Tetrabiblos*, perceived by Ptolemy himself as the natural complement to the astronomical sciences, in which one raised and answered questions regarding the influence of the planets and the stars on the sublunar region, a domain which was then and has continued to be identified with that of astrology. The Islamic counterpart of this tradition was represented in a variety of texts dealing with *'ilm al-ḥkām al-nujūm* (science of the decrees of the stars) in contradistinction to *'ilm al-hay'a*, then understood to mean the science of astronomy. The *al-ḥkām* texts ranged in sophistication and detail over a variety of subjects, and are best represented by such texts as the well-known work of Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī (d. 886) *Kitāb al-Madkhal ilā 'ilm al-ḥkām al-nujūm* (Introductory Book to the Science of the Decrees of the Stars),⁷ and Bīrūnī's equally famous book *al-Taḥfīm li-awā'il ṣinā'at al-Tanjūm*, conveniently translated by Ramsey Wright as *Elements of Astrology*.⁸

⁶ See the general survey of such *Zīj*es in E. S. Kennedy, "A Survey of Islamic Astronomical Tables," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 46, 2 (1956).

⁷ This book was translated into Latin by Johannes Hispanensis under the title *Introductorium majus or Liber introductorius magis in magisterio scientiae astrorum*. See Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, p. 29. ⁸ (London: Luzac, 1934).

Development of the Hay'a texts

As we have just seen, the *Hay'a* texts essentially dealt with the overlapping areas represented by the *Almagest* and the *Planetary Hypotheses* traditions.⁹ On the whole, these texts tended to be descriptive and theoretical in nature. They did not concern themselves with the mundane mechanical problem of computing the actual position of the planets at a specific time. Rather they dealt with the theory behind the planetary motions, i.e., they included a description of the spheres producing the planetary motions, giving dimensions of such spheres and the relationships they hold to one another. They also contained a description of the celestial phenomena as observed from the earth, hence leading to detailed treatments of spherical astronomy and its sister discipline spherical trigonometry, where such issues as the *qibla* determination are best answered. Because they attempted to combine two Greek traditions, namely the tradition which represented the planetary motions as motions of solid spheres and the tradition of the *Almagest*, where one attempted to use the actual observations in order to produce predictive mathematical models on the basis of which one could compute the positions of the planets for any required time, the authors of these texts had to face a very subtle problem. This problem was one of harmonizing the physical Greek universe of the solid spheres with the mathematical description of that universe as represented in the mathematical models of the *Almagest*. Put differently, these are the texts in which one attempted to represent the actual physical universe by mathematical models that could be used to predict the behavior of such a universe. From this perspective, one can safely say that this tradition was a genuine Arabic creation.¹⁰ The Arabic tradition of the new *Hay'a* texts began with such early works as the *Jawāmi' 'Ilm al-Nujūm* of Ibn Kathīr al-Farḡhānī (c. 850),¹¹ for example, continued with such works as *Hay'at al-'Ālam* of Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1038),¹² and began to be

⁹ For a description of the contents of these texts and their stylization in later times, see J. Livingston, "Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's al-Tadhkira: A Category of Islamic Astronomical Literature," *Centaurus*, 17 (1973), pp. 260-75.

¹⁰ I do not know of any Greek works similar to the Arabic *Hay'a* texts or containing representations of the celestial spheres once as physical bodies and once as mathematical circles all in the same context as one usually finds in the Arabic counterparts.

¹¹ Ibn Kathīr al-Farḡhānī, *Jawāmi' 'Ilm al-Nujūm*, *Elementa Astronomica* (Amsterdam: Jacob Golius, 1669).

¹² For Ibn al-Haytham's *Hay'at al-'Ālam*, see K. Kohl, "Über den Aufbau der Welt nach Ibn al-Haitām," *Sitzungsberichte der Physikalisch-Medicinischen Societät zu Erlangen*, 54-55 (1922-23), pp. 144f., and the more recent edition by Zvi Langerman (New York: Garland Press, 1990).

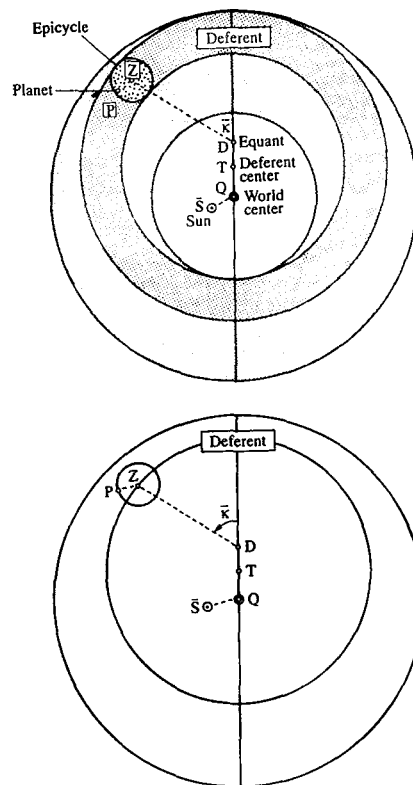


Fig. 1 Ptolemy's Model for the superior planets, drawn as solid spheres, and as circles which represent solid spheres. Note that in this model the sphere of the deferent is supposed to move uniformly around the equant point D, which is different from its center T. For a solid sphere this motion is impossible.

standardized with *al-Tabṣira fī 'Ilm al-Hay'a* of Abū Bakr al-Kharrāqī (1138)¹³ and the various *Hay'a* texts of his successors, which we shall discuss momentarily.

The Hay'a texts during the Marāgha period

For the purposes of this discussion, the Marāgha period covers the period of intellectual history extending from the last years of Abbasid Baghdad till the middle of the fourteenth century. Of course, the most dramatic astronomical activity which took place during this time was the establishment of the Marāgha observatory, which was founded in 1259, just one year after the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols.¹⁴ The observatory may have continued to function until as late as 1316.¹⁵

The activities leading to the establishment of the observatory are very significant in and of themselves. First, we note that the person associated with the idea of establishing an observatory, securing permission and finances from the Ilkhanid monarch Hulāgū (1256–65) to do so, gathering the engineers and the astronomers required for such a project, and establishing the endowment that would, in principle, guarantee the observatory's continued functioning was the famous Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī mentioned earlier.

Second, the persons involved in this enterprise were brought together from widespread quarters. The sources record the names of Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urḍī (d. 1266) of Damascus, Yahyā ibn Abī al-Shukr al-Maghribī (d. 1283), originally from Spain, and the mysterious Jamāl al-Dīn (Cha-Ma-Lu-Ting) from China?¹⁶ to name only a few. Others are mentioned by name in the introduction to Ṭūsī's Persian astronomical handbook, the *Zīj-i Ilkhānī*, which was produced at the Marāgha observatory.

Third, most of these people who were invited to come to Marāgha by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī were distinguished astronomers in their own right, who had evidently already acquired some fame in order to

¹³ Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, pp. 116f.

¹⁴ It is ironic how political and intellectual history do not always follow the same periodization, for here the same dynasty which brought the legendary devastation to Baghdad in 1258 and was very much maligned in contemporary and later Mamluk histories was the one which allowed the most extensive astronomical institution to be founded, and was thus responsible for one of the most important flowerings of astronomical intellectual production.

¹⁵ For the life and duration of this observatory, see the excellent study of Sayılı, Aydın, *The Observatory in Islam and its Place in the General History of the Observatory* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1960), pp. 187–222.

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 191ff.

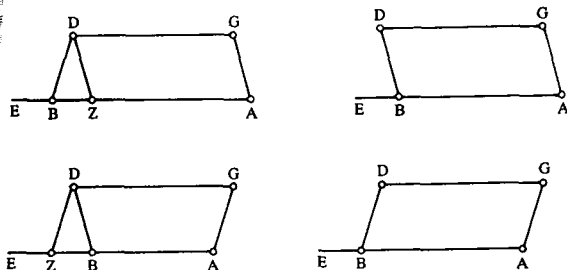


Fig. 2 'Urḍī's Lemma. If any two equal lines AG, BD, describe equal angles with respect to line AB, whether internally or externally, then line GD, which joins the extremities of the two said lines, will always be parallel to line AB.

qualify them for such an undertaking. But most importantly for our discussion of the *Hay'a* texts, as far as we can tell, at least one of those astronomers, namely 'Urḍī, had already produced such an Arabic text, called simply *Kitāb al-Hay'a*,¹⁷ before coming to Marāgha in 1259. In it, 'Urḍī undertakes a general review of Ptolemaic astronomy, during the course of which he proposes a new mathematical theorem that I have dubbed the 'Urḍī Lemma. The importance of this theorem to later astronomical works, and specifically to Copernican and Renaissance astronomy, has been treated elsewhere, and need not be restated here.¹⁸

The first Persian *Hay'a* text that we know of, the *Risālah-i Mu'iniye*, was also written at this time, by none other than Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī himself. In it Ṭūsī simply followed the other basic Arabic texts on the subject and produced an elementary exposé of Ptolemaic astronomy. At some later date, after 1247, Ṭūsī authored another short Persian tract called *Dhayl-i Mu'iniye* (or *Hall-i Mushkilāt-i Mu'iniye*), in which he attempted to solve some of the more important theoretical astronomical problems regarding the harmonization of the Ptolemaic physical and mathematical astronomy that were mentioned above. It is in this short tract that Ṭūsī developed a

¹⁷ Now edited by George Saliba, *The Astronomical Works of Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urḍī: A Thirteenth-Century Reform of Ptolemaic Astronomy* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wahda al-'Arabiya, 1990).

¹⁸ G. Saliba, "Arabic Astronomy and Copernicus," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 1 (1984), pp. 73–87.

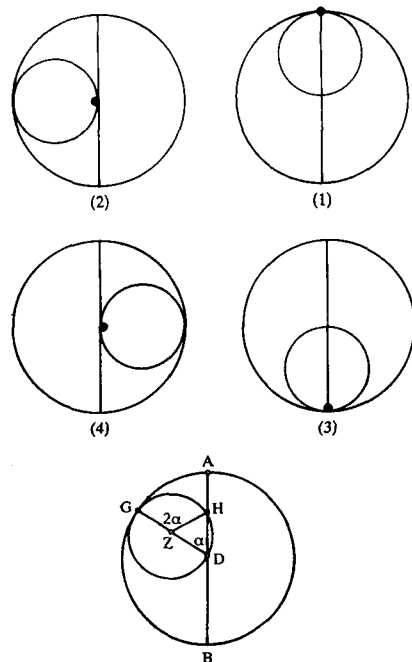


Fig. 4 The Tūsī Couple. As the big sphere moves by an angle α , and the small sphere moves in the opposite direction by an angle 2α , the common point H will oscillate back and forth along diameter AB. It is interesting to note that Copernicus uses the same lettering to prove the same theorem in the *De revolutionibus*.

The remaining participants in the activities of the Marāgha observatory, who wrote on anything similar to the problems treated in the *Hay'a* texts, such as Yahyā ibn Abī al-Shukr al-Maghribī, just mentioned, and Qutb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311), the most distinguished student of Tūsī, all wrote in Arabic as well. In fact, Shīrāzī wrote more than one Arabic text on the subject, and mentioned several other Arabic works, which were written

around the same time or before.²² There was no such activity in Persian.

As for the other production at the Marāgha observatory, the most important Persian work, which became the standard work for later generations of practicing astronomers, was the famous Persian *Zīj-i Ilkhānī* mentioned earlier. The results recorded in it are claimed to have been due to the observations conducted at the Marāgha observatory. This claim cannot, however, be substantiated at this time because this work has not yet been critically studied by modern historians of Islamic science. The only other *zīj* which has so far been identified and was indeed based on observations collected at the Marāgha observatory, was written in Arabic by Yahyā ibn Abī al-Shukr al-Maghribī.²³ Therefore, as far as we can now tell, the only Persian astronomical work which was produced at the Marāgha observatory was Tūsī's *Zīj-i Ilkhānī*.

To return to the *Hay'a* texts, two other such works in Arabic have come to light from the fourteenth century. These are the works of Šadr al-Sharī'a of Bukhāra (c. 1347)²⁴ and Ibn al-Shāṭir of Damascus (d. 1375).²⁵ Authors such as Jaghmīnī (1221), Nizām al-Dīn al-Nisābūrī (c. 1300), al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (1413), Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Shirwānī (d. 1453)²⁶ and others have either written elementary treatises similar to Kharaqī's *Tabṣira*, or commentaries on Tūsī's *Tadhkira* which have yet to be studied for their original contributions. It is important to note, however, that they all wrote in Arabic.

²² None of these elaborate works of Shīrāzī has been published, but several studies have either extracted the information from them or mentioned them in passing. See Kennedy, "Planetary Theory"; G. Saliba, "The Original Source of Qutb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī's Planetary Model," *Journal for the History of Arabic Science*, 3 (1979), pp. 3–18; G. Saliba, "The Astronomical Tradition of Marāgha: A Historical Survey and Prospects for Future Research," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 1 (1991), pp. 67–99.

²³ G. Saliba, "An Observational Notebook of a Thirteenth-Century Astronomer," *ISIS*, 74 (1983), pp. 388–401.

²⁴ Ahmad Dallāl, *An Islamic Response to Greek Astronomy* (Leiden: Brill, 1995). ☉

²⁵ I have completed a critical edition of the major work of Ibn al-Shāṭir, *Nihāyat al-Sūl fi taṣḥīh al-Uṣūl*, which is now being prepared for translation and commentary and eventual publication. Information about the contents of this work, however, had already been the subject of several articles, namely V. Robert, "The Solar and Lunar Theory of Ibn al-Shāṭir," *ISIS*, 48 (1957), pp. 428–32; V. Robert, "The Planetary Theory of Ibn al-Shāṭir: Latitudes of the Planets," *ISIS*, 57 (1966), pp. 208–19; E. S. Kennedy, and V. Roberts, "The Planetary Theory of Ibn al-Shāṭir," *ISIS*, 50 (1959), pp. 227–35; F. Abbūd, "The Planetary Theory of Ibn al-Shāṭir: Reduction of the Geometric Models to Numerical Tables," *ISIS*, 53 (1962), pp. 492–99; E. S. Kennedy, "Late Medieval Planetary Theory," 57 (1966), pp. 365–78; and G. Saliba, "Theory and Observation in Islamic Astronomy: the Work of Ibn al-Shāṭir of Damascus (d. 1375)," *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 18 (1987), pp. 35–43.

²⁶ Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, *passim*.

It is also important to note that such Arabic *Hay'a* texts became the dominant astronomical textbooks in the traditional school curriculum. In fact, there is enough evidence to indicate that these textbooks continued to be used until modern times.²⁷ Tūsī's *Tadhkira* was the subject of various commentaries and recensions during medieval times as well.²⁸ As has already been stated, modern scholars can now demonstrate with great certainty that the theorem of the Tūsī Couple which was stated and proved in it, together with 'Urđī's Lemma embedded in 'Urđī's work mentioned above, became the standard mathematical tools used by all succeeding generations of serious astronomers up to and including Copernicus himself.

The few other Persian texts such as the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muzaffarī*, a Persian version of Shīrāzī's Arabic *al-Tuhfa al-Shāhiya*, and Tūsī's *Zubdah-i Hay'a* were either too elementary to be commented upon or superseded by the more sophisticated works of the same authors.²⁹ In fact there is a continuous Arabic tradition of commentaries on the *Tadhkira*, of varying lengths, that continued to be written well into the sixteenth century and beyond.

To summarize, what we now refer to as the Marāgha school was indeed the most creative school of Arabic astronomy, producing the two most important mathematical theorems just mentioned.³⁰ It was also, at the same time, an Arabic school, even when it included astronomers who could have written in Persian. This observation cannot be underscored enough at this point.

The Samarqand observatory

The next major astronomical activity came during the early part of the fifteenth century, under similar circumstances. Here too, the events leading to the establishment of Ulugh Beg's observatory and the activities conducted during the life of the observatory were very similar in nature. The main persons associated with this observatory were also gathered from various localities: Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Kāshī (d. 1436/7) from Kāshān, south of modern-day Tehran, and

Qāḍīzādeh al-Rūmī (d. between 1436 and 1446) from Bursa, south-east of modern-day Istanbul. As in Marāgha, one of the astronomers also seems to have come to Samarqand with his own *Hay'a* text, albeit a more elementary one than 'Urđī's *Hay'a*. This is at least true in the case of Qāḍīzādeh, who must have brought with him his commentary on the *Mulakhkhaṣ* of Jaghmini, and may have also brought a commentary on Tūsī's *Tadhkira*.³¹

As at the Marāgha observatory the main activity at the Samarqand observatory was to produce a *zīj* like the *Ilkhānī Zīj*. Kāshī, Ulugh Beg himself, and maybe 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Qūshjī may have all cooperated to produce the Persian *Zīj-i Sulṭānī Gūrgānī* of Ulugh Beg. Kāshī also produced his own *Zīj-i Khāqānī* in Persian, but he still wrote his mathematical masterpiece, *Miṣbāḥ al-Ḥisāb*, in Arabic.

This is where the similarities with the Marāgha observatory end. For when it came to the production of *Hay'a* texts there was no similar output at Samarqand which could parallel the works of Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and his colleagues at Marāgha. The only text that can be pointed out as fitting in this category is a very short Arabic treatise by 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Qūshjī called *Risālah fī Ḥall Ishkāl al-Mu'addil li-l-Masīr* (*A Treatise Regarding the Solution of the Problem of the Equant [of Mercury]*).³² Qūshjī's other Arabic treatise, *al-Risālah al-Fathīya*, which was obviously written after his association with the Samarqand observatory,³³ is an elementary exposé of Ptolemaic astronomy.

Conclusion

Having surveyed very quickly the main astronomical works produced at the two most famous medieval observatories, as well as those produced during the period separating the two, we can now attempt to draw some conclusions regarding the main trends in Persian astronomy.

The first Persian astronomical trend seems to have begun in pre-Islamic times with the production of the *Zīj ash-Shahrayār*, which is no longer extant.³⁴ Not much is known about this work, except that it was first written in Pahlavi and was later translated into Arabic

²⁷ Autobiographical reports of people like Ahmad Kīrāvi, *Zandegānī* (Tehran, 1323/1945), p. 59, and Hasan Taqīzādeh, *Yād-nāme* (Tehran, 1349/1971), p. 290, reveal that such *Hay'a* texts as Jaghmini's and *Tashrīḥ al-Aflāk* of al-'Amīlī were included in the regular *madrasa* curriculum as late as the early part of the twentieth century. I am grateful to my colleague Prof. Hamid Dabashi of Columbia University for the reference to Taqīzādeh's biography.

²⁸ See Ragep, *Memoir*, and Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, pp. 146ff.

²⁹ C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature*, (London: Luzac, 1958), II, pp. 64, 60.

³⁰ Saliba, "The Astronomical Tradition of Marāgha."

³¹ Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, pp. 174–75.

³² This treatise is now critically edited and translated by me in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 3 (1993), pp. 161–203.

³³ This treatise was written for the Ottoman sultan Muḥammad the Conqueror (1451–81) at the occasion of his conquest of Irāq. See Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, pp. 178f. ³⁴ Kennedy, "Survey," pp. 7–8.

sometime during the eighth century. This translation is also lost, but various elaborate references to it can be found in several other Arabic *Zīj*es.³⁵ After a hiatus of several centuries this *Zīj* tradition was later resumed, first through translations of Arabic *Zīj*es into Persian,³⁶ and later by various original Persian *Zīj*es culminating in such distinguished works as the *Zīj-i Īlkānī* of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (c. 1240), *Zīj-i Khāqānī* of Jamshīd b. Ghīyāth al-Dīn Kāshī (c. 1420), and *Zīj-i Sulṭānī Gūrgānī* of Ulugh Beg (c. 1430).

The second trend in Persian astronomical literature dealt directly with astrology. Here we think of the second version of Bīrūnī's *Taḥfīm*, apparently this author's only Persian work, which seems to have been rendered into Persian by the author himself around 1030, after it had been already completed in Arabic. Other Persian texts, of varying quality and detail, include such works as *Rawḍat al-Munajjimīn* of Shāh Mardān b. Abī al-Khayr al-Rāzī (c. 1082),³⁷ *Kifāyat al-ta'īm fī ṣinā'at al-tanjīm* (c. 1147) by Ṣāḥib al-Ḥaqq al-Ghaznavī,³⁸ and *Jawāmi' aḥkām al-nujūm* of Ṣāḥib al-Dīn al-Baihaqī (d. 1169).³⁹

Of the third type of astronomical literature, namely that which dealt with the *Almagest* and its derivatives, we note that Naṣīr al-Dīn's *Tahrīr al-Majistī* (*Redaction of the Almagest*) was first written in Arabic in 1247, and was later incorporated in the Persian work *Durrat al-Tāj* of his student Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311). The same work continued to be paraphrased and commented upon in Persian up to the eighteenth century, as is evident from the *Taqrīb al-Tahrīr* (*Simplification of the Reduction*) by al-Muhandis b. Luṭfāllāh (1747).⁴⁰

The most remarkable observation that can be made at this point is the apparent paucity of the fourth type of astronomical literature, namely that which dealt with the criticism of the theoretical foundations of Greek astronomy usually taken up by the Arabic *Hay'a* texts mentioned above. Admittedly, there is the elementary text, *Risālah-i Mu'iniya*, written by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī sometime between 1235 and 1254, which looks like the Arabic *Hay'a* texts. The contents of that text, however, are quite elementary when compared to the contents of Ṭūsī's own later Arabic text *al-Tadhkira*. As was stated above, the more original part of Ṭūsī's work, the part in which he attempts

to attend to the criticism of Ptolemaic astronomy and to its theoretical modification, was written in the appendix to the *Mu'iniya*, the *Hall-i Mushkilāt-i Mu'iniya*, sometime after 1247.⁴¹ Ṭūsī had already promised in his Arabic work, the *Tahrīr*, that he would take up those thorny issues of Greek astronomy at a later period. He even went as far as to propose at least the one preliminary theorem in which he would resolve the difficult issue of planetary latitude.⁴² But he did not really do so, in a comprehensive fashion, until he wrote his Arabic text of *al-Tadhkira* in 1261.

Therefore, as far as I can tell, the Persian reader who did not read Arabic would not have had access to the most original astronomical production published in the contemporary or earlier Arabic *Hay'a* sources. The only access the Persian reader would have had to the discussion regarding the theoretical foundation of Greek astronomy and the objections that could be raised against it would have been through the brief and inadequate text of Ṭūsī's *Hall*. The non-Arabic reader had to wait more than fifty years for the Persian text of *Ikhtiyārāt Muṣaffarī*, written around 1304, which was itself produced by Ṭūsī's own student Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī as an abridgement of his own Arabic work *Nihāyat al-Idrāk fī Dirāyat al-Aflāk*. To judge by the quotations of later astronomers, to my knowledge, very few astronomers, if any, ever quoted Shīrāzī's Persian *Ikhtiyārāt*, while a great number did in fact quote his Arabic *Nihāyat*, which was indeed one of the most elaborate Arabic *Hay'a* texts written in 1281.

The period between the two observatories did not produce any more Persian *Hay'a* texts. When we review the works of the astronomers engaged in the Samarqand observatory, namely Qāḍizādah al-Rūmī, Kāshī, Qūshjī and Ulugh Beg himself (d. 1449) we find the following. Only Qāḍizādah and Qūshjī produced one *Hay'a* text each, but both were written in Arabic.⁴³ Kāshī and Ulugh Beg wrote no such books, as far as we can tell.⁴⁴ The only other text dealing with the theoretical foundation of Greek astronomy is the very short treatise of Qūshjī mentioned above, which dealt with the problems relating to the model

⁴¹ See Saliba, "The Role of the *Almagest* Commentaries." ⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ In fact Qāḍizādah produced only a commentary on the elementary *mulakhkhaṣ* *al-hay'a*, which was written by the thirteenth-century astronomer Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Jaghminī (1221) (Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, pp. 175, 164), and Qūshjī produced an equally elementary *Hay'a* text called *al-Fathiya*, which was later translated into Persian (Suter, *Die Mathematiker*, p. 178).

⁴⁴ The treatise *Mukhtaṣar dar 'Ilm-i Hay'at*, attributed by Storey to Kāshī, is fragmentary, and needs to be studied more thoroughly before the attribution is confirmed and before it could be accepted as a contribution to the *Hay'a* tradition. See Storey, *Persian Literature*, pp. 72-73.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶ I am thinking here of the translation of Kūshyār's *al-Zīj al-Jāmi'* into Persian by Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Abī Ṭālib al-Munajjim al-Tabrizī in 1090. See Storey, *Persian Literature*, pp. 42-43.

³⁷ See Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 44.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

As for the *Hay'a* texts, which were mainly written in Arabic, as we have just seen, they seem to have remained within the circles of the educated class. Since it has been stated that Tūsī's *Tadhkira* was probably the most common textbook in the traditional *madrasah*, it stands to reason to assert that those who studied that text were, in principle, very far removed from astrological computations; a text like that of the *Tadhkira* is totally useless in that regard. In view of the traditional curriculum of the *madrasah* and the traditional class of students, this is not surprising, for the curriculum was mainly geared to the interests of the religious class, the natural enemies of the classical astrological doctrines. As for their being written in Arabic, this is not surprising either, for it is this same religious class which continued to use Arabic for educational purposes up to this very day.

On the basis of this fragmentary and very limited evidence, one can say, in a preliminary fashion, that the general character of Persian astronomy distinguishing it from the contemporary Arabic astronomy was that Persian astronomy dealt more with astrological computations and less with theoretical astronomical issues. This does not mean that Persian astronomers did not interest themselves in these theoretical issues. It does mean that whenever they did, they wrote and spoke about these issues in Arabic.

In a relatively unstudied text, a commentary on Tūsī's *Tadhkira*, written during the reign of Ulugh Beg by Faṭḥ Allāh al-Shirwānī (c. 1440), the author states that he was a student of Qāḍīzādah at the Ulugh Beg school in Samarqand. He goes on to describe the actual conduct of the class, where the students were studying Nisābūrī's commentary on Tūsī's *Tadhkira*, under the professorship of Qāḍīzādah, and in the presence of Ulugh Beg himself. In the same text a reference is made to Ulugh Beg's visits to the school twice or three times a week, where he would listen to the students reading Nisābūrī's text, and would interrupt them at critical points to ask them for spontaneous responses to the subtle difficulties raised in the text, and then add comments of his own to their responses. Such pedagogical procedures are also confirmed in Kāshī's letters to his father.⁵⁰ This discussion was obviously conducted in Arabic in the presence of the professor, who would grant permission to his students to teach the text as was done by Qāḍīzādah in this instance.⁵¹ Such remarks confirm once more the commonly held opinion that Ulugh

Beg himself was an accomplished astronomer in his own right. They also confirm the remark made by Qūshjī in the introduction to his treatise on the equant of Mercury that he was personally taught the mathematical sciences by Ulugh Beg himself.

There is no doubt, therefore, that there was an interest in the *Hay'a* texts, even among those who wrote only Persian *Zīj*es such as Ulugh Beg. The fact that they did not write such texts themselves may simply reflect their temperament and their preference for observational astronomy, and the more empirical astrological aspect of that science. They obviously thought that it was a great sign of learning to be well informed on the theoretical issues too. However, that part of their education seems to have been reserved for the school system, where such theoretical discussions could take place. But there they were conducted in Arabic.

This schism between the two types of writings, the *Hay'a* texts and the more astrologically oriented *Zīj*es, apparently indicates a social cleavage as well. It seems that those close to the court and to political power saw themselves as serving their patron as astrologers, and hence they required the production of *Zīj*es, while those who thought of themselves as custodians of the intellectual tradition continued to populate the school system, where the sophisticated education, religious and otherwise, was given in Arabic. The general trend therefore clearly reveals the association of these *Hay'a* texts with the school system, and with impractical men who dealt only with theory. Kāshī says that much of Qāḍīzādah in his letter to his father mentioned above.⁵²

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that although theoretical astronomy, as represented by the *Hay'a* texts, seems to have been pursued with vigor in the Persian domain, as is so evident from the various commentaries on Tūsī's *Tadhkira*, no such vigorous activity was taking place in the Arabic-speaking areas during this period. Astronomers in the Arabic-speaking areas seem to have satisfied themselves with the Arabic texts coming to them from the Persian domain, and did not author much of their own after the thirteenth century. If we continue to use the earlier categorization of practical versus impractical, we shall have to say that the Arabic-speaking astronomers were mainly producing a different kind of practical texts, namely those which are usually designated as *miqāt* (time-keeping) literature. They also seem to have had a different school system which may have encouraged *miqāt* literature but may not have fostered

⁵⁰ E. S. Kennedy, "A Letter of Jamshīd al-Kāshī to his father: Scientific Research at a Fifteenth Century Court," *Orientalia*, 29 (1960), pp. 191–213, esp. p. 205.

⁵¹ See *Sharḥ al-Tadhkira*, by Faṭḥ Allāh ibn abī Yazīd al-Shābarānī al-Shirwānī, Süleymaniye Library, Damat Ibrahim 847.

⁵² See Kennedy, "A Letter."

research in the *Hay'a* theoretical texts. This line of argument is tangential to our main topic and should be pursued somewhere else.

To return to the theoretical astronomical issues in the Persian domain, which seem to have been handled by impractical men only, it is remarkable too that these issues were handled within the Persian school system, which also reflects the special status of Arabic, which obviously continued to be perceived as the language of science as it was by Bīrūnī, despite the fact that political figures and practicing astrologers preferred the Persian *Zījes* which they patronized. In order to substantiate these claims further, much more work needs to be done on the curriculum of medieval schools in the whole Islamic world, and on the complex relationship the astrologers had with the political power at Persian courts. The most significant result that one hopes to achieve, however, is the one relating to the actual position of theoretical astronomy within the school curricula of the Islamic world which were followed by the very learned religious men who were far from the mundane demands of political power. All these issues should be pursued elsewhere and at another time.

3 · The West-Eastern Divan: the influence of Persian poetry in East and West

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

Harvard University

In 1923, Muḥammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the leading poet-philosopher of Muslim India, published a collection of Persian poems called *Payām-i mashriq*, *The Message of the East*. It was his answer to Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*, which, in turn, was the German poet's reaction to the first German translation of Persian poetry and, in particular, the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ. Published in 1819, this work of Goethe was barely noticed in the Muslim world, where the literary influences from France and Britain, the two colonial powers, became dominant during the nineteenth century. Iqbal, however, well versed in German and an ardent admirer of Goethe, deemed it fitting to write a poetical reply to the *West-östlicher Divan* and thus to create an East-Western Divan based to a certain extent upon the model of the German work. The centerpiece in this new Persian Divan is a scene in which Iqbal makes his two spiritual guides meet in paradise, Maulānā Rūmī from the East, and Goethe from the West, for each of them "has a book but is not a prophet," as Jāmī wrote concerning Maulānā and his *Mathnavi*. As for Goethe, "the sage of the West who was fascinated by the charms of Persia," his book is the *Faust*, in which Iqbal saw "humanity individualized" and which seemed to him "nothing short of divine workmanship," as he says in his *Stray Reflections*,¹ a note-book jotted down in 1910. He felt that the two poets shared one leading idea, which he summarized by quoting Maulānā's verse from the *Mathnavi*:

From Satan intellect, from Adam love.²

¹ Muḥammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, ed. Javid Iqbal (Lahore: Gh. Ahmad & Sons, 1961), no. 40. For other remarks about Goethe's importance in Iqbal's work, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963, repr. Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1989), pp. 330–31.

² Muḥammad Iqbal, *Payām-i mashriq* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1923), p. 246.

Thus, the Indo-Muslim philosopher-poet discovered in the work of both of his spiritual guides the principle that was central in his own philosophy and poetry, i.e., the predominant role of dynamic, synthesizing love as opposed to pure analytical intellect.

The scene in paradise is a delightful invention, although, ironically, Goethe was not very fond of Maulānā (a fact that Iqbal rightly identified in his Urdu introduction to the *Payām-i Mashriq* as resulting from the lack of adequate translations of the *Mathnavī* or the *Divān-i Shams* during Goethe's lifetime). Iqbal himself, on the other hand, made some scathing remarks about Ḥāfiz and his "seductive charm," that is, about the very poetry which inspired and delighted Goethe.³ Yet, the spiritual encounter between Goethe and Rūmī in the work of the leading modernist philosopher of Muslim India is remarkable for various reasons: Iqbal can be considered the last great Persian-writing poet of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, while Goethe stands at the very beginning of the appreciation of Persian poetry in the West, and in particular in Germany.

The tradition in which Iqbal grew up goes back to the very beginnings of the Muslim conquest of northwestern India under Maḥmūd of Ghazna. Lahore, the city in which Iqbal spent the better part of his life and where he died in 1938, to be interred next to the majestic Badshahi mosque, was made the capital of the Ghaznavid empire's Indian province in 1026 and soon afterwards turned into a center of Islamic learning and poetry. It was this city where Hujwiri (d. c. 1071) wrote his *Kashf al-mahjūb*, the first theoretical work on Sufism ever written in Persian and rightly famed for its lucid exposition of the major themes of Sufi theory and ritual.⁴ Shortly afterwards the first major Indo-Persian poets appeared – Abū'l-Faraj Rūnī (d. 1091), whose verse was admired by no less a Persian master than Anwarī,⁵ and, even more important, Mas'ūd ibn Sa'd-i Salmān (d. 1131). His poems,⁶ which were collected by his contemporary Sanā'ī, contain a famous *shahrāshūb* and one of the rare applications of the Indian *bārahmāsa* genre in Persian, the *Māhhā-yi fārsī*, a poem on the twelve months of the year. His *habsiyyāt*, prison poems written in the fortress of Ney, set the model for numerous other prison poems com-

³ Shaikh Muḥammad Ata, *Iqbāl-nāma* (a collection of Iqbal's letters, in Urdu) (2 vols., Lahore, n.d.), II, no. 11.

⁴ 'Alī ibn 'Othmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, tr. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac and Leiden: Brill, 1911; many reprints).

⁵ Abū'l-Faraj Rūnī, *Divān*, ed. M. Maḥdavi Damghāni (Tehran: Bāstān, 1348/1969).

⁶ Mas'ūd ibn Sa'd-i Salmān, *Divān*, ed. Rashid Yāshmi (Tehran: Payrūz, 1339/1960). Sanā'ī's poem on the occasion of his collection of Mas'ūd's poetry is in *Divān-i Ḥakīm Sanā'ī*, ed. Mudarris Razavi (Tehran: Ibn-e Sinā, 1341/1962), p. 1060.

posed in the course of the following centuries in the subcontinent, up to the Urdu *habsiyyāt* of Faiz Ahmad Faiz.

With the power of the Muslims expanding toward the east and south of India, a literary activity in Persian developed which contained all forms and kinds of literary works.⁷ The conquest of Khorasan and northwest India to the southern Punjab by Chingiz Khan's hordes and the ensuing annexation to Delhi of Upper Sind and Multan by the newly rising dynasty of the "Slave Kings" led to the transfer to Delhi of a good number of literati who had found shelter from the Mongol threat at the court of the governor Qubācha in Uchh – including 'Aufī, who had dedicated his *Lubāb al-albāb* to Qubācha's vizier. These scholars and literati constituted the first of many groups of immigrant Persian writers to be followed by countless others who settled in the various parts of the subcontinent from Lahore and Delhi to Bengal and the Deccan. Among the historians, Mīnhāj as-Sirāj (d. 1260) stands out, as does Fakhrudīn 'Irāqī among the mystical poets; his stay at the Suhrawardi *dargāh* in Multan for twenty-five years resulted in an output of superbly beautiful mystical love songs; he continued his work after returning to the Near East, living, during Rūmī's last years, in Konya and Tokat and then settling in Damascus, where he was to die in 1289 in the spiritual environment of Ibn 'Arabī's followers.

Delhi developed into the most important seat of learning and literature during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries despite the constant political upheavals and changes of dynasties. The time is marked by the presence of the versatile Amīr Khusrau, the *tūtī-yi Hind*, "India's parrot," and *Turk Allāh*, "God's Turk." He was born in Patiala in 1253, son of a Turkish officer and an Indian mother, and died in 1325 after a long and eventful life that spanned the reigns of seven kings of Delhi. He was buried close to his spiritual master, Nizāmuddīn Auliya, the leading saint of the music-loving Chishti Order. Although Amīr Khusrau is credited with some Hindi verses and riddles (*paheliyāns*) he wrote almost exclusively in Persian, and his lyrical poetry with its "powdered style," as E. E. Berthels calls it, seems to foreshadow the elegance of Mollā Jāmī. Amīr Khusrau was, however, not only the author of delightful lyrical poems, some of which are recited in *qawwālīs* to this day, but also a master of epic

⁷ Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1968), and in particular the contribution of Jan Marek, "Persian Literature in India," pp. 711–30; Annemarie Schimmel, "Islamic Literatures in India," in Jan Gonda, ed., *History of Indian Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973), II, pp. 1–60; Alessandro Bausani, *Storia delle letterature del Pakistan* (Milan: Nuova Accademia, 1958).

poetry, not only concentrating (as did so many writers) on an imitation of Nizāmī's *Khamsa* but composing, for the first time, Persian epic poems dealing with recent political and social events, not to forget his contributions to Persian epistolography in his *Ijāz-i khusrau*.⁸

It seems that he was the first to imitate Nizāmī's *Khamsa* in the subcontinent, and soon this priceless collection of poetry became a model for Indo-Muslim poets. It was customary to call epic meters not by the traditional names of the Persian meters such as *mutaqārib* or *hazaj musaddas*, but rather to speak of "the meter of Majnūn Laylā" or "the meter of Khusrau Shīrīn." Furthermore, the very titles of many of the later Indo-Persian epics allude to the titles of Nizāmī's epics, and one can be certain that any epic whose title ends with *-ār*, such as Amīr Khusrau's *Maṭla' al-anvār* or Jahāngīr Hāshimī's (d. 1539) *Mazhar al-āthār*, is written in imitation and with the meter of Nizāmī's *Makhzan al-asrār*. No fewer than seventy-eight of such epics by Indo-Persian authors were known to Ahmad Ali Ahmad, the author of the *Haft Āsumnān*, a compendium of the seven current epic meters of which, unfortunately, only the first volume has been published.⁹

Nizāmī's epics, often illuminated, belonged to the spiritual staple food of Indo-Muslim poets, who in later times would enlarge their thematic frame by introducing the loving couples of Indian folk tradition: Akbar's court poet Faiẓī dealt with *Nāl Daman*, the touching Sanskrit love story of Nala and Damayanti, while Sindhi and Panjabi poets wrote on *Sassui Punhun* or *Hīr Ranjhā*.¹⁰ Figures and names from Nizāmī's epics were used as symbols through the centuries – up to Iqbal, for whom Farhād represents the cheated member of the working class who is deprived of his wages by the king.¹¹ Equally widely known was Firdūsī's *Shāhnāma*; not only did it inspire poets (though not as many as did Nizāmī's romances), but its characters permeate the whole of Indo-Muslim culture. The Slave Kings of Delhi in the thirteenth century, who were of Turkish descent, would call their sons after the heroes of the *Shāhnāma*, and up to the nineteenth century allusions to the scenes of this great Iranian epic as well

⁸ For a survey of publications on Amīr Khusrau see Schimmel, "Islamic Literatures of India," pp. 16–19.

⁹ Ahmad Ali Ahmad, *Tadhkira-yi Haft Āsmān* (Calcutta, 1873, repr. Tehran, 1963). For Mīr Ma'zūm Nāmī's *Khamsa* see Schimmel, "Islamic Literatures of India," p. 35.

¹⁰ Hafeez Hoshyarpuri, *Mathnavihā-yi Hīr Ranjhā* (Karachi: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1957).

¹¹ Iqbal, *Payām-i mashriq*, p. 236. The tragic fate of Farhād has also inspired the Turkish leftist poet Nazim Hikmet.

as the use of the names among the Muslim elite continued: the leading poet of the nineteenth century, Mīrzā Asadullāh Ghālib (1797–1869), boasts of descending from Afrāsīyāb.

Maulānā Rūmī's work became known in the subcontinent during the lifetime of Maulānā's son Sulṭān Valad (d. 1312), for Bū 'Alī Qalandar of Panipat visited Anatolia in the early days of the fourteenth century, and his own *mathnavī*s are strongly influenced by Rūmī's style and content.¹² The *Mathnavī* was to permeate all levels of poetry and literature both in the high Indo-Persian literature and in that of the regional languages. It sparked off an immense number of commentaries and was known in Bengal as early as the end of the fifteenth century not only to Muslims but also to the Hindus, for a Hindu historian complained about that time that even "the holy brahmin recites the *Mathnavī*."¹³ Incidentally, the knowledge of Persian poetry, in particular Rūmī and Hāfiz, remained alive for centuries among educated Hindus, including, in our century, Rabindranath Tagore.

But it was not only the poetry and the extensive historiography in Persian, which had become the official language of administration wherever a Muslim government was found, that formed Indo-Muslim life and culture. With the language came calligraphy, and calligraphers from Iran arrived to work at Indian courts; and it might happen, as was the case in Bidar (Deccan) that "the miracle-working hands of Hindu craftsmen" applied the Persian calligrapher's elegant lines onto the hard stone of a mosque or a mausoleum.¹⁴ At a somewhat later stage, in the sixteenth century, calligraphers from Herat, which lost its central role as the Timurid capital after Ḥusain Baiqarā's death in 1506, and several masters of *nasta'liq* style moved to India, as did a number of poets and scholars, and Mīr 'Alī Haravī's son brought a considerable number of his father's album pages from Bukhara to Mughal India. The works of Mīr 'Alī and other leading representatives of this elegant style were highly admired and fetched amazingly high prices during the Mughal period.¹⁵

It was, in fact, the Mughal empire where Persian poetry and art

¹² Hāfiz Sājid Allāh Tafhīmī, "Sharh-i ahvāl u āthār-i fārsī-i Shaikh Sharaf-addīn Abū 'Alī Qalandar Panipati," Ph.D. diss. University of Karachi, 1975.

¹³ M. Enamul Haq, *Muslim Bengali Literature* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1957), p. 42. For the participation of Hindus in Persian literature see Syed Abdullah, *Adabiyāt-i fārsī mēn Hindūn kā hīssa* (Delhi, 1942).

¹⁴ For the relations between Persian calligraphers and Indian patrons see Annemarie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), chap. 2.

¹⁵ About Mīr 'Alī see Stuart Cary Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1987), chapter by Annemarie Schimmel, "The Calligraphy and Poetry in the Kevorkian Album," especially pp. 32–36.

reached their apogee in the subcontinent. That does not mean that there were no Persian authors between the late fourteenth and the early sixteenth centuries – on the contrary, one should not forget names like that of Zīā'uddīn Nakhshabī, (d. 1350), who translated the *Tūfīnāma* from Sanskrit into Persian, a translation that became a kind of bestseller not only in India and Iran but also in Turkey and, through translations, in Europe. Another center of literature, including translations from the Sanskrit, was Kashmir, especially during the rule of Bādshāh (r. 1420–70).¹⁶ Numerous minor poets continued the poetical tradition; mystical writers composed their treatises, and the genre of *mal'fūzāt*,¹⁷ the sayings and accounts of the daily life of Sufi masters, flourished from the days of Ḥasan Sijzī (d. 1328), called “the Sa’dī of India” because of his limpid, sweet lyrics. Ḥasan was the first to note down the sayings of the Sufi master Nizāmuddīn Auliya, and thus set an example for many generations to come. These *mal'fūzāt* allow us precious insights into the life and routine of mystical leaders and, at the same time, glimpses into the everyday worries of the ordinary people who came to ask the masters for help or consolation. They thus complement the official historiographical works, which usually do not deal with such “lowly” people and their problems, or with their customs. The Sufis also wrote numerous letters, and many of their letters of spiritual guidance – such as the *Hundred Letters* of Sharafuddīn Manerī (d. 1380 in Bihar)¹⁸ or of the Naqshbandi leader Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) – reflect spiritual and worldly events.¹⁹ *Tadhkira*-writing, collections of biographies of poets, saints, and calligraphers became increasingly important, and authors of such valuable chronicles from all corners of the subcontinent left us interesting accounts of those who lived in or visited their respective provinces.²⁰ The Mughal period was of special importance for the development of what Hermann Ethé has wittily called “the Indian summer of Persian

¹⁶ Muḥammad Aṣṣāḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shu'arā'-i Kashmīr*, ed. Sayyid Ḥusāmuddīn Rāshdī (5 vols., Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967–68), Girdhar I. Tikku, *Persian Poetry in Kashmir* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

¹⁷ Khaliq Aḥmad Nizāmī, *Mal'fūzāt ki tārikhī aḥammiyat* (*The Historical Importance of the mal'fūzāt*), Arshi Presentation vol., ed. Malik Ram (Delhi, 1965).

¹⁸ Paul Jackson, Sharafuddīn Manerī, *The Hundred Letters* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

¹⁹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of his Thought and a Study of his Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal and London: McGill University Press, 1971). Translations of the letters of Sirhindī, the *imām rabbānī*, are available in Turkish and Urdu.

²⁰ For *tadhkiras* in India see Schimmel, “Islamic Literatures of India,” pp. 47–49, 51; a typical example is Muḥammad Ghauthī's *Gulzār-i abrār*, with biographies of more than 500 saints, mainly from Gujarat.

poetry” – a time in which the classical forms, while slightly and slowly changing color, acquired an unusual power as new, often unexpected, and sometimes weird *concetti* were introduced. To be sure, Bābur (r. 1526–30), the founder of the House of Timur, as the Mughals liked to call themselves, wrote his autobiography in Turki, and Turki remained the idiom spoken or at least understood up to the nineteenth century in the courtly circles of Mughal India and other dynasties of Turkish origin. Yet, the main interest of the intellectual elite centered upon Persian. The Memoirs of Bābur were translated into Persian – not a very elegant Persian, in fact – by the Khānkhānān ‘Abdur Raḥīm (1556–1627),²¹ Akbar's generalissimo and son of the – likewise poetically minded – Bayram Khan (d. 1561), who was able to lead emperor Humāyūn back from his Persian exile and help him establish the Mughal rule firmly in India. In the years following Humāyūn's return an increasing number of poets, calligraphers, and miniaturists arrived from Iran, for the Persian ruler Tahmasp had abandoned his interest in poetry and painting after his “sincere repentance” in 1543. The artists felt that India would be a good place to settle, and in an almost uninterrupted stream they came to the Mughal empire, which was probably the most splendid among its contemporaries, namely the Ottoman and the Safavid Persian empires. India, at that point, was the dreamland – one could say “the America” – of the poets, who looked out for wealthy patrons to whom they could devote their panegyrics and from whom they could expect handsome rewards. They expressed their hopes in many verses, and Ṭālib-i Amulī's words translate their feelings very well:

Nobody brought a Hindu to India –

Thus you better leave your “black fortune” [i.e., misfortune] in Iran.²²

In view of the influx of poets to India, it does not seem surprising that the Khānkhānān ‘Abdur Raḥīm, who owned a splendid library in which about a hundred people worked, was eulogized by no fewer than 104 poets, as ‘Abdul Bāqī Nihāwandī, his biographer, tells us –

²¹ For the Khānkhānān see M. Abdul Ghani, *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court* (Allahabad: Indian Press, 1929, repr. 1972), III, pp. 220ff.; Chhotubhai R. Naik, ‘Abdu'r-Raḥīm Khān-i-khānān and his Literary Circle (Ahmedabad: Gujarat University Press, 1966).

²² Edward Granville Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906–24, repr. 1953 and often), IV, p. 255. For the topic of the “black” Hindu see Annemarie Schimmel, “Turk and Hindu, a Poetical Image and its Application to Historical Fact,” in Speros Vryonis Jr., ed., *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages*, Fourth Levi della Vida Conference (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), pp. 107–26.

and although the Khānkhānān's own Persian verses are not great literature, they are at least sweet and charming.²³

The names of the masters of the developing Indian style, *sabk-i hindī*, such as 'Urfī Shīrāzī (d. 1591), Naẓīrī (d. 1612), or Ṭālib-i Amulī (d. 1627), have become an integral part of the literary history of Persia, and the accomplishments of 'Urfī and Faizī in Akbar's days were discussed as far away as Turkey, where their influence is felt in the Ottoman *Divan edebiyatı* of the seventeenth century, for classical Ottoman poetry had developed as it were under the wings of Persian poetry, with Maulānā Rūmī, Jāmī, and 'Urfī as some of its most important sources of inspiration.

A large number of Mughal poets joined the Mughals in their Kashmiri summer resorts, and the verses of Kalīm (d. 1650) and Ghānī Kashmīrī combine the strong hues and melancholy of a late autumn day in the Kashmir valley. Equally colorful is the poetry written by Persian authors in the Deccan; Firishta wrote his *Gulzār-i Ibrāhīm* for the art-loving Sultan Ibrāhīm 'Adilshāh II of Bijapur, for whom Ṣūhūrī composed highly sophisticated poetry and prose, comparable to the unreal Deccani style of painting and the tulip-like minarets and domes of Deccani mosques and mausoleums. For the Indian style grew differently from the Iranian tradition proper, and the reader used to the classical simplicity of Sa'dī or the crystal-like verses of Ḥāfiz will now find a tendency for disrupted parts of a whole to be used and for the harmonious balance of themes to be destroyed.²⁴ One encounters a tendency to use strange grammatical forms such as infinitives in the plural, and Naẓīrī is the spokesman for most poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when he tells his colleagues:

Seek a difficult meaning, and bring a far fetched word!

The *sabk-i hindī* also has an increasing tendency to incorporate new images and topoi, which reflect recent developments in the cultural and material life in Mughal India: fine arts and poetry explain each other, as it were.²⁵ For the first time one reads about spectacles (at

²³ 'Abdul Bāqī Nihāwandī, *Ma'āthir-i raḥimī*, ed. M. Hidayat Husain (3 vols., Calcutta, 1910–31).

²⁴ Wilhelm Heinz, *Der "Indische Stil" in der persischen Dichtung* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974); Alessandro Bausani, "Contributo a una definizione del 'stilo indiano' della poesia persiana," *AIUOS*, New Series VII (1958).

²⁵ Annemarie Schimmel, "Gedanken zu zwei Porträts des Moghulherrschers Sāh 'Alam I Āfāb," in Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann, eds., *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer (Beirut and Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), pp. 545–61.

about the same time that bespectacled calligraphers or painters appear in miniatures); items like the hour glass – so splendidly shown in the famous painting of the Emperor Jahāngīr sitting on an hour glass²⁶ – belong to the new themes; and while classical poets loved to describe silk and damask and used them as poetical images, the *sabk-i hindī* poets show a special interest in velvet, which serves to symbolize their own state of mind – will not the velvet, instead of lying in sweet slumber, wake up at the complaint of the nightingale and stare at the poet with a thousand frightened eyes? Chinese seladon and craquelé porcelain appear, and the verses are filled with shifting sand dunes or smoke, or are considered as lightly as a footprint in water. The term *shikast*, "broken," seems particularly fitting to describe the broken state of the human heart and, at some later time, the breakdown of the whole political and social fabric of Muslim India; but it is, at the same time, also relevant to calligraphy because the broken style, *shikasta*, becomes ubiquitous in the Persian and Indo-Persian world.

The greatest masters of the late *sabk-i hindī* are Bēdil (d. 1721)²⁷ and Nāṣir 'Alī Sirhindī (d. 1698), about whom a refugee from Iran, 'Alī Ḥazīn, wrote in 1730 to his compatriots that if he would send Bēdil's prose and Nāṣir 'Alī's poetry to Iran, his compatriots would just laugh at it and despise this un-Persian Persian . . . And while Bēdil's fame reached Afghanistan and central Asia, where his work continues to be regarded as an inexhaustible source of inspiration, the Iranians still shake their heads at his extravagant way of breaking up and reuniting poetic forms – and yet, there are verses of such deep melancholia and dark-glowing longing that the patient reader (and patient he has to be!) will always be amply recompensed by finding true poetic pearls.

However, the increasing complexity of the *sabk-i hindī* along with the crumbling of the Mughal empire, and especially the political turmoil after Aurangzēb's death in 1707 seemed to require another form of literature, and so the Urdu language, long spoken by the people and sometimes at court, was considered worthy of the interest of the poets.²⁸ Urdu had developed in the Deccani kingdoms, and generally followed the classical Persian models, especially in the case of epic poetry. Delightful lyrics were written in a mixture of

²⁶ Richard Ettinghausen, *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India* (New Delhi: B. C. Sanyal, 1961), pl. 14.

²⁷ Mirzā Bēdil, *Kulliyāt* (4 vols., Kabul: Ministry of Education, 1962–65).

²⁸ Annemarie Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature from the Beginnings to Iqbal," in Jan Gonda, ed., *History of Indian Literature*, VIII (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), pp. 123–261.

indigenous and Persian styles, and early Urdu *mathnavī*s often alternated the themes of traditional Indian love stories with well-known Persian couples such as *Lailā Majnūn* or *Yūsuf Zulaikha*. It is said that the influence of Wālī Deccani, a poet of the first rank, made the poets of Delhi writing in Persian aware of the possibilities of their spoken language, and after Wālī's visit to Delhi around or shortly before 1707, they began to develop a kind of grammar of the nascent Urdu poetry by applying all the prosodic and rhetorical rules of classical Persian to it. We read that the leading masters of Urdu poetry would gather once a week in the Zinat al-masājid mosque in Delhi, a small mosque adjacent to the Red Fort and founded by one of Aurangzēb's daughters, to discuss how to apply the Persian poetical rules to Urdu. Thus a literature emerged which reached maturity in a short space of time. The Urdu literature composed in Delhi and Lucknow, however, was so heavily impregnated with Persian vocabulary and imagery that it could be read, in many cases, simply as Persian with a sprinkling of Urdu grammar (exactly the same was true of the highest Ottoman *Divan* poetry). To this day, a native speaker of Urdu has great difficulty in understanding the work of poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries properly, and indeed, even some passages of Iqbal's Urdu verse. And yet, Urdu poetry was not fully appreciated by the elite – the leading poets still clung to Persian even though their Urdu style was much better. Perhaps the most typical example is that of Mirzā Ghālib (d. 1869), who is acclaimed as the greatest master of Urdu but who himself preferred his Persian verse to his "colorless" Urdu. This attitude resembles that of earlier writers, who would apologize every so often for writing in the regional languages of the subcontinent, from Braj to Sindhī and Panjabi, for the benefit of their illiterate or at least not highly educated listeners. To write in such a lowly idiom instead of the sophisticated Persian, the true language of poetry and philosophy, seemed only partly justified. Ironically, while Ghālib's Urdu poetry is known to almost every Muslim in the subcontinent, knowledge of his numerous Persian poems is restricted to a small circle of specialists.

It also has to be said that Ghālib, like many poets writing in Persian before him, excelled in the art of imitation, *naẓīra*. Indeed, most of his *qaṣīdas* and quite a number of his Persian *ghazals* are modeled according to the examples taken from the great writers of the past such as Khāqānī, Naẓīrī, Amīr Khusrau, and Anvarī.²⁹ This

²⁹ C. S. Gilani, *Ghalib: His Life and Persian Poetry* (Karachi: Azam, 1962). The latest edition of his Persian verse is in seventeen volumes (Lahore, 1969).

kind of imitation was common in Persian poetry, yet it requires more technical skill than inspiration when one has to follow faithfully a set model in rhyme-words and meter.

Iqbal is somewhat different as he did not concentrate on panegyrics for rulers in his Persian verse but has a message to convey to everyone. He apologizes for his shortcomings:

I am from India; Persian is not my native tongue!³⁰

His epic poetry follows the model of Rūmī's *Mathnavī*, whose easy-flowing meter inspired almost every later poet who wanted to discuss educational and religious topics. Iqbal's *ghazals* sometimes insert quotations from earlier poets, particularly from Naẓīrī and 'Urfi, and contrary to the classical *ghazal* they are usually conceived as a whole, developing at least to a certain degree in logical sequence. He himself described Persian poetry in his thesis as follows:

The butterfly imagination of the Persian flies half inebriated as it were, from flower to flower and seems to be incapable of reviewing the garden as a whole. For this reason his deepest thought and emotions find expression in disconnected verses, *ghazal*, which reveal all the subtlety of his artistic soul.³¹

Iqbal's critique of Hāfiz as seductive and therefore dangerous has often been quoted, but despite his verdict against the great *ghazal*-writers Iqbal himself cannot help using the traditional Persian style to a great extent. In fact, it would have been well nigh impossible for him to discard the traditional forms and images, for people would not have understood his message if it had been couched in a completely "new" language without the time-honored concepts and figures of speech. Maulānā's poems offered him a good starting point, and the influence of Nāṣir-i Khusrau and of Khāqānī is palpable – it is not an accident that his last letter, written a few weeks before his death, closes with a quotation from Khāqānī's *Divān*: a warning against Greek philosophy and thought.³²

Scarcely any writer in the subcontinent after Iqbal has used the traditional Persian for poetry, but even the most recent and progressive

³⁰ Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1915), line 175.

³¹ Shaikh Muḥammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908, p. VIII).

³² *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, compiled by "Shamloo" (Lahore: al-Manar Academy, 1945; 2nd ed. 1948). "Statement on Islam and Nationalism in Reply to a Statement of Maulana Husain Ahmad, Published in 'Ehsan' the 9th March 1938," p. 239: The quotation is from Khāqānī, *Divān*, ed. Zia'uddin Sajjādī (Tehran: Zawwār, 1357/1978), p. 172.

poets in Urdu cannot do without some of the traditional symbols that were introduced in Iran centuries ago.

Iqbal, however, is not only the last in the long line of poets writing in Persian in the subcontinent, but is also someone (and probably the only one) who was well aware of the Western poetical and philosophical tradition and could enrich his verse by introducing Western figures. But in addition, he was aware of and willing to accept the work of Goethe and thus to produce the first, and to this day the only, answer to a book that has largely colored the image of Persian culture at its best among German intellectuals, that is, the *West-östliche Divan*. His ingenious confrontation between Rūmī and Goethe is certainly much more than a mere poetical device; it is the acknowledgment of a living and inspirational tradition and an expression of the admiration of the Persian heritage in both East and West.

But how did the Western world get interested in Persian poetry?³³ Europe's first encounters with the Muslim world were established during the period of the Crusades, but at the same time Arabic scholarship and science influenced Europe through Spain, which had been annexed by the Muslims from 711 onward. "The pollen of the southern flowers was wafted into the East . . . and the flowers wandered up from the south as formerly people had wandered down from the north," in the words of Joseph von Görres; that is, legends, poetry, and tales came from the Arab world to be incorporated into the medieval European literary tradition, and a certain interest in the *Morgenland*, the mysterious, dangerous, and yet fascinating lands of the Saracens, is reflected in many a medieval tale. The Koran was rendered into Latin first in 1143, but centuries passed before a less inimical approach to the sacred book of the Muslims was attempted. The Christian powers hoped, after the failure of the Crusades, that perhaps the Mongols might have the power to subdue the Muslims, but this hope too remained unfulfilled although the enterprises of men like Marco Polo and Rubruck resulted in interesting travelogues that allowed a glimpse into the strange world of the East.

The second major encounter of the European and the Muslim world happened again in the aftermath of a military confrontation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries after the expanding Ottomans had besieged Vienna in 1529. The shock that followed this event led to a new outbreak of anti-Turkish sentiment, and that

³³ For a survey of the development see Annemarie Schimmel, "Europa und der islamische Orient," in A. Schimmel, ed., *Der Islam III* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990), pp. 336-87. An interesting study is Andrea Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur* (Hildesheim and Zurich: Olms, 1984).

meant anti-Islamic feeling, which was reflected in popular literature; the *Türkenlieder* of Germany and Austria are extremely vulgar and filled with hatred, and Lohenstein's Turkish dramas show the Turks as the most despicable people imaginable.

However, at that very period travelers from Europe entered a new world, that of Iran, where Ismā'il the Safavid ("the Sophi," as both Arabic and Western sources call him) had established the rule of the Twelver Shia in 1501. Ismā'il was the arch enemy of the Ottoman Turks, who had crushed his army in Chaldiran in 1514, and seemed therefore to be a possible ally of the European powers against the Ottomans. Decade after decade European travelers visited Iran, writing their travelogues and reporting the splendor of Isfahan and later, the court of Shah Abbas. The travelogues of the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer, of the Frenchmen Chardin, Tavernier, and Bernier, and the Italian Pietro Della Valle informed the European public of the developments in Iran, and thus created a deeper interest in the Safavid state. This interest was strongest in Germany, and one of the numerous small princes in northern Germany, the ruler of the minute principality of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, sent out a group of 34 people on November 6, 1633, to establish trade and political relations with the Persian emperor – an attempt that was doomed to failure and yet bore rich fruits on the spiritual, although not the material, level. One year after the embassy had left, a French diplomat, Du Ryer, produced the first French translation of Sa'di's *Gulistān*, and a German translation of this very work from the Persian can be regarded as the most important result of the Schleswig-Holsteinian embassy. The leading figure in this journey was Adam Olearius, who described the numberless adventures or mishaps of the long and arduous journey in his *Neue Orientalische Reyssbeschreibung* (1647), and his companion, the fine German poet Paul Fleming, told some of their adventures in colorful German poems. Olearius then published, in 1653, a German translation of the *Gulistān*, called *Persianischer [sic!] Rosenthal, übertragen aus dem Persischen . . . mit Hilfe eines alten Persianers namens Hakwirdi . . .* This book boasts, through the pen of its translator, that:

Man kann mich hinfort wohl
den deutschen Perser nennen
(From now on one can well call me the German Persian)

while Fleming claimed with justified pride:

Durch uns kommt Persien in Holstein eingezogen!
(Thanks to us, Persian enters in state in Holstein.)

This statement is almost too modest, for the *Gulistān* was greeted with delight wherever German literature flourished.

In conjunction with the new approach to the East during the Enlightenment period the two translations of Sa'dī's *Gulistān* deeply influenced the image of the Orient. Among the Germans, Johann Gottfried Herder (d. 1803), theologian and philosopher and paternal friend of Goethe, was one of the most enchanted readers of Sa'dī from the days of his youth. Herder followed the opinion of Hamann, that "poetry is the mother tongue of the human race," and rightly held that "from poetry we can certainly acquire a deeper knowledge of times and nations than from the deceiving and hopeless history of politics and war." Although he had devoted his early studies to "The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," he was open-minded enough to consider every trace of poetical expression in the languages of the world as a deeply important witness to the working of the human soul. His admiration for poetry led him to a fine assessment of Arabic poetry in his article "Spruch und Bild, insonderheit bei den Morgenländern" (1792), but on the whole he concentrated mainly on Persian poetry, which was just becoming known through the translations of the *Gulistān* and Thomas Hyde's version of Sa'dī's *Būstān* and was steadily enriched by the studies of British scholars at Fort William, Calcutta, as well as by Austrian orientalists educated at the Translators' Academy (Dolmetscherakademie) in Vienna, which had been founded by the Empress Maria Theresa.

Herder, who enthusiastically received the first news about Persepolis and the deciphering of its inscriptions, was fascinated by Sa'dī, "the finest flower that can bloom in a sultan's garden." Sa'dī was for him the embodiment of everything beautiful and useful in Persian literature, and his moral stance appealed to Herder's own moral attitude. It has, however, to be said that Sa'dī's graceful verses were transformed by Herder into rather heavy German didactic poetry which lacks the charm of the original (which Herder, of course, did not know). But he was more interested in the content than in the formal aspects of poetry and wrote about Sa'dī: "He seems to have plucked the flower [i.e., reached the highest goal] of moral poetry in his language, in which he is said to have written in an extraordinarily pure and delightful way, as his poetry was and still is considered a rose of that language."

Persian poetry appeared to Herder as a "daughter of the earthly paradise," but the modern reader will be astounded to read the German scholar's remark in his journal *Adrastea*: "An Hafyz' Gesängen haben wir fast genug, Sa'dī ist uns lehrreicher gewesen"

(We have almost enough of Hāfiz's songs; Sa'dī has been more useful to us).

It is doubtful whether Herder was familiar with the very first translation into Latin of one *ghazal* of Hāfiz, which the Austrian scholar Meninski published in 1680. He may have known the brief English version of a *ghazal* by Thomas Hyde (1767), but he was certainly aware of the two anthologies which two friends published one shortly after the other. These are the collection by Count Revitzky, *Specimen Poeseos Persici* (Vienna, 1771) and that of his friend William Jones, *Poeseos asiaticae commentariorum libri sex* (1774). These works can be regarded as the first major attempts to introduce Persian poetry to an educated Western reading public. To what extent the versified English version of several *ghazals* of Hāfiz by J. Nott (1787) contributed to people's understanding is difficult to judge. Despite Herder's personal opinion it was Hāfiz, not Sa'dī, who was to become the greatest inspiration of Western scholars and amateurs during the following century. That holds true especially for Germany. This is due to the German translation of his complete *Divān* which was offered in 1812–13 by the indefatigable Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer (-Purgstall).³⁴ Hammer, born in Graz in 1774, the year when William Jones's translations were just being published, entered the Dolmetscherakademie, where he studied Turkish, Persian, and Arabic; he served for some time in the Austrian diplomatic service and devoted his entire life to oriental literature. He was able to find wealthy friends to found a major journal for oriental, especially Islamic, studies (*Fundgruben des Orients*), and saw himself as a link between Eastern and Western culture, translating poetry, writing innumerable articles, offering free renderings of poetry he had read and enjoyed, and publishing immense works on literary as well as political history – his history of the Ottoman empire (*Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*) in ten volumes is still indispensable.

His first publication connected with Persian poetry proper was a drama, *Shirin* (1809), based on Nizāmī's *Khusrau Shirin*, but the great breakthrough came with the *Divan des Mohammed Schemseddin Hafis*, which appeared in two small volumes in 1812–13 and contains the *Divān*'s translation into what Hammer considered German poetry. The most important aspect of this translation, which does not really reflect the diamond-like clarity and beauty of Hāfiz's verse, is its introduction, which gives an account of the difficulties into which

³⁴ A good survey is: Ingeborg H. Solbrig, *Hammer-Purgstall und Goethe: "Dem Zaubermeister das Werkzeug"* (Bern: Lang, 1973).

the translator runs when dealing with classical Persian poetry. The problem of the gender of the beloved is solved with the practical remark that he refrained from changing the object of love into the feminine "because then I would have been compelled to praise girls for their green sprouting beards."³⁵

Goethe, who had been interested in Islamic topics in his youth (as proved by his attempt at writing a drama on the Prophet of Islam in 1779) but who had neglected the Near Eastern world for decades, was fascinated by Hammer's book. With the instinct of a true poet he sensed the importance of Hāfiz even through these rather shapeless renderings and had himself to become productive to absorb the happy shock that this poetry left upon him ("Ich mußte mich produktiv verhalten"). In order to understand Hāfiz better, Goethe investigated the literature pertaining to Iran and to Islam, be it travel-ogues, translations, or first attempts by Western orientalist to write a history of the Islamic peoples.³⁶ When he had almost completed his collection of poetry, which he called *West-Östlicher Divan*, he was able to consult Hammer's *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, which appeared in 1818 in Vienna. This literary history of Persia is, to quote Hammer himself, "the fruit of the perusal of fifty *mathnavīs* and *dīvāns* with more than one million verses." It follows on the whole the classical *tadhkiras*, such as *Daulatshāh*, and is important for the wide knowledge its author displays in choosing and translating hundreds of fragments from the Persian (although a true analysis of the material is lacking); but its greatest merit is its useful introduction to the imagery of Persian poetry, the knowledge of which is indispensable to everyone who wants to enjoy this poetry in general and the verse of Hāfiz in particular, whose highly refined and yet almost invisible wordplays, puns, and rhetorical devices make his poems resemble precious diamonds. In this field Hammer's contribution – now virtually forgotten in orientalist circles – is of the greatest importance. Nevertheless, it was not the whole library which he wrote singlehanded which made him immortal, but the influence his work exerted upon Goethe. In the main part of the *West-Östliche Divan* Goethe answered Hāfiz's and sometimes Sa'di's verse in German poetry, capturing the different moods of the poets and leading his reader through the various spheres of poetical thought, reflecting many of the images and themes of classical Persian literature. But he

³⁵ *Der Divan des Mohammed Schemseddin Hafis* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1812–13), I, p. VII.

³⁶ *West-Östlicher Divan*, unter Mitwirkung von Hans Heinrich Schaeder herausgegeben und erläutert von Ernst Beutler (Leipzig: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1943).

also added an important set of *Noten und Abhandlungen*, (notes and dissertations) in which he carefully elucidated the historical setting of Arabic and Persian poetry and the social, political, and religious background of much of this literature and analyzed the symbols and images of Persian and Persianate literature. When discussing the peculiar style of the *ghazal* – a topic that has led to many heated discussions among Iranologists during the last few decades – one should not forget Goethe's remark that the *ghazal* is "a kind of quodlibet" and that the poet has to conform to the fetters of rhyme and meter, but "we admire the poet who gracefully overcomes these obstacles and we are delighted to see how intelligently and carefully he handles himself in such a tricky situation." This emphasis upon the external difficulties of the *ghazal*, however, does not at all exclude an understanding of its "esoteric" meaning. Hammer advocated a plain "worldly" interpretation of Hāfiz while the great French orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy followed the line of mystically minded interpreters, but Goethe, great poet that he was, knew that "the word is a fan" ("Das Wort ist ein Fächer"), both hiding and revealing, and every line in a poem can be read differently, for the art of the poet is to combine the two levels of experience without needing a heavy mystical-philosophical or a simple light-hearted "material" interpretation. True art, especially Persian lyrics, is valid on the level of the metaphor and on that of reality. Goethe's interpretation of Hāfiz, which is splendidly discussed in Hans Heinrich Schaeder's work *Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens* (Leipzig, 1938), showed the way the European approach to Persian poetry should take, but unfortunately the *West-Östliche Divan* was among the least read and understood parts of Goethe's vast production.

As for Hammer's influence, it not only extended to Goethe but bore even more visible and tangible fruit in the work of Friedrich Rückert. Rückert (1788–1866)³⁷ had spent a short time with Hammer in Vienna on his return from Italy in the spring of 1818, and the young man immediately grasped the basics of Arabic and Persian. Returning to his native Franconia he settled for some time in Coburg and, employed only on temporary assignments, devoted himself wholeheartedly to the study and translation of Persian poetry, which was soon followed by his masterful translations from the Arabic and the Sanskrit. Rückert had been known for more than a decade as a gifted poet in German; his children's songs, which were taught in

³⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, *Friedrich Rückert, Lebensbild und Einführung in sein Werk* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987); Annemarie Schimmel, ed., *Friedrich Rückert, Ausgewählte Werke* (2 vols., Frankfurt: Insel, 1988).

German schools till recently, had won him fame, and even more his *Geharnischte Sonette*, a collection of sonnets written during the freedom wars against Napoleon in 1812–13. His sojourn in Italy had resulted in a vast amount of verses in Italian forms and meters, and the recently acquired oriental languages offered a seemingly inexhaustible treasure of poetry for a skilled translator. In a poem published some twenty years after his first infatuation with Persian and Arabic literature, Rückert speaks of his *Zwei Liebschaften*, two love affairs, i.e., Arabic and Persian poetry. As for Lady Persian Poetry, "ein gesprächiges Kind," a talkative child, he says:

She has the spring breeze explain the flowers' mysteries,
like a wave in which the clouds are reflected;
she wants to know how fountain and eye mirror each other;
she dreams and laments in the chorus of roses and nightingales,
wraps herself in colors and fragrance,
and flies straight from the garden toward heaven,
oblivious of life and its darkness.³⁸

One immediately discovers the pun on "fountain" and "eye" (Arabic *'ain*; Persian *chashm* and *chashma*), and enjoys the romantic images which capture the main topics of Persian lyrics.

Rückert's fascination with Persian literature resulted in an enormous output of poetry, and one can say without exaggeration that he translated into German verse whatever was available during the first half of the nineteenth century. Just as Goethe answered the voice of Hāfiz in his *West-Östlicher Divan*, Rückert, at the very beginning of his oriental studies, published a collection of poetry, the *Östliche Rosen* (*Eastern Roses*) which was recommended by Goethe especially to musicians – and indeed, a good number of the finest poems from this collection were set to music by Schubert ("Du bist die Ruh"; "Lachen und Weinen," for example), just as in later years numerous composers from Schumann to Mahler (not to mention contemporary composers) gained inspiration from Rückert's singable lyrics.

Östliche Rosen, however, is only a minute fraction of Rückert's work, although these poems reflect the images and style of Hāfiz much better than most "exact" translations. Throughout his life the poet-orientalist remained interested in Hāfiz's poetry. As the *Östliche Rosen* vie in elegance and charm with Hāfiz's originals Rückert was able to disclose the secret of the Persian poet's unending fascination in a poem which surpasses even the most sophisticated puns in Persian and defies translation into any other language:

³⁸ In *Ausgewählte Werke*, II, p. 9.

Hafis, wo er scheint Übersinnliches
nur zu reden, redet über Sinnliches.
Oder redet er, wo über Sinnliches
er zu reden scheint, nur Übersinnliches?
Sein Geheimnis ist unübersinnlich,
denn sein Sinnliches ist übersinnlich.

Pointing to the sensual and yet suprasensual meaning of Hāfiz, Rückert strove to maintain this equilibrium in his own translations and free adaptations. He translated into German verse some eighty *ghazals* by Hāfiz but, as often happened to him, never published them, so that it took nearly a century after his death before all of them were published at different times and by different scholars – and there may be undiscovered manuscripts lying in his immense heritage.³⁹ For his interest in Hāfiz remained alive to his last years, and four years before his death, in 1862, he once more encountered Hāfiz, who, "coming inebriated from the tavern of Love," became for a while his companion.

The indefatigable poet-orientalist turned to Firdūsī at an early stage of his career. The *Shāhnāma* had been published in 1811 by Lumsden and had inspired a very free German rendering by Joseph von Görres in 1819. When the major edition of the *Shāhnāma* by Mohl appeared in Paris in 1838 Rückert was just publishing a German verse rendering of its most famous episode, *Rostem und Sohrab*, an epic poem in alexandrine verse, which was very close to his heart – so much so that he would have liked to dedicate it to Goethe if he had still been alive. But the reception of the poem in Germany was disappointing. Therefore Rückert never disclosed the fact that he had translated major parts of the *Shāhnāma* into German verse and, according to his notes, was working toward a critical edition of the text. Again, as in the case of his Hāfiz translations, the text of the poetic version of the *Shāhnāma* was discovered only long after his death, and was published in Berlin in three volumes from 1891 onward. Before that in 1850, another German verse translation of the great Persian epic had appeared: a work by Count Schack which Rückert criticized as lacking in true understanding and rendered in too smooth a language. His own version won the highest praise from the leading German orientalist of the late nineteenth and early

³⁹ J. Christoph Bürgel, *Gedichte aus dem Divan des Hafis*, ausgewählt und herausgegeben (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1972); Friedrich Rückert, *63 Ghazelen des Hafis*, herausgegeben von J. Christoph Bürgel (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988); a similar survey of English renderings is Arthur J. Arberry's classic: *Fifty Poems by Hafiz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947, 1953).

twentieth century, Theodor Nöldeke, who saw in it "one of the greatest masterpieces of Rückert's art as a translator, whose renderings are equally important as philological aid for the orientalist."

One of the first Persian poets discovered in the West was Jāmī, whose *Bahārīstān* was published in 1778 in an *Anthologia Persiaca* by the Sprachakademie in Vienna in a Latin translation. Rückert, who had offered a small fragment of Jāmī's *Yūsuf Zulaikha* in 1828 (after it was translated into German by Vincenz von Rosenzweig-Schwannau in 1824), discovered a manuscript copy of Jāmī's *Divān* in the library of Gotha and could not help rendering into German verse the elegant and charming lyrics of Jāmī, whom he compared, in the dedicatory poem, to a fragrant musk deer which he had brought from the steppes of Iran into the fetters of melodious German rhymes. Indeed, his translations, parts of which were published in the first volume of the journal of the newly founded Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, capture both the spirit and the form of Jāmī's poetry.⁴⁰ The highly sophisticated style of Jāmī had a particular appeal for Rückert, about whom someone remarked that "the artificial was Rückert's nature" ("Das Künstliche war seine Natur"). That means that as a poet, classified as a mannerist poet, he had an enormous affinity with the rhetorical finesse of classical Persian poetry. That is evident in particular from the fact that he was able to render into German a work on Persian rhetoric and poetics, the *Haft Qulzum*, which his former teacher Hammer had received from Lucknow and whose seventh volume Rückert translated – not without struggling his way through an enormous number of typesetting errors. It seems incredible that he was able to disentangle an extremely difficult Persian text which would be almost unsurmountable even one century later when scholars have all kinds of grammars and dictionaries at their disposal. To this day the *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser*, reissued by his disciple Wilhelm Pertsch in 1872, is indispensable for everyone who wants to study Persian rhetoric and the arts of chronograms and of poetical riddles.

Rückert turned also to Nizāmī whose tale of *Turandot* from the *Haft Paikar* was known widely enough in the late eighteenth century to inspire Schiller's drama and which was later to form the basis of Puccini's opera. Rückert turned only to the *Iskandarnāma*, a small part of which he published in translation in the *Frauentaschenbuch* in 1824. One knows, however, that he used Nizāmī's *Khamsa*, and

⁴⁰ *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (1844, 1845); *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (1848, 1850–52, 1870–72); the complete text in L. Hirschberg, *Rückert-Nachlese* (Weimar, 1910–11).

especially the *Makhzan al-asrār* in a manuscript (which still bears some pencil notes in his hand), when he collected material for his lengthy didactic poems *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen*, a widely read collection of words of wisdom and moral stories and anecdotes, parts of which were even translated into English and published in Boston in 1882.⁴¹ To emphasize Rückert's role in the history of German–Persian relations even more we have to turn to his interest in Maulānā Rūmī, which preceded his interest in Ḥāfiz and resulted in 1820 in a set of 24 *ghazals* after themes of Rūmī. He was inspired at that point not so much by the Persian originals but rather by Hammer's rough translations in the *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste*, each of which is preceded by the first line of the original Persian so that sound and rhythm can be gauged. It is amazing to see how thoroughly the young orientalist understood Maulānā's spirit, and his free renderings reflect this spirit better than any later attempts made by poets and orientalists. Even more important is that this collection of poetry was the first time that the form of the *ghazal* with its monorhyme was used in German. Rückert was sure that:

Die fremde Form, die ich zuerst in deinen Garten pflanze,
O Deutschland, wird nicht übel stehn in deinem reichen Kranze.

The foreign form which I am first planting in your garden, will
not look too bad in your rich flower wreath, O Germany.)

And he foresaw that people would use the *ghazal* in the same way and with the same ease as they used the romance *stanza* and the sonnet. Rückert was right – the form became very fashionable during the following decades in German literature. Rückert's friend and disciple, Count Platen, used it in his *Spiegel des Hafis* (Mirror of Ḥāfiz) of 1821, a collection of fragile and elegant *ghazals* to vent his tender feelings for a male beloved. Rückert, then, used the form frequently and could express his deepest and most moving thoughts in it; he was even able to sing of his grief for his two deceased young children in *ghazal* form in the large collection of *Kindertotenlieder*.⁴²

In the German tradition, which seems to have been growing from Platen's *Spiegel des Hafis* rather than from Rückert's Rūmī-*ghazals*, the new form was generally associated with the name of Ḥāfiz; the

⁴¹ For Rückert's impact on the United States and in particular New England see Henry A. Pochman, *German Culture in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957).

⁴² Annemarie Schimmel, "The Emergence of the German Ghazal," in Muḥammad Omar Memon, ed., *Studies in the Urdu ghazal and Prose Fiction* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, South Asia Studies, 1979), pp. 168–74.

great master of Shiraz soon developed into the patron saint of all those who wanted to express their not-so-bourgeois sentiments, their aversion to church and clergy (thus Daumer) or other feelings that could not be expressed easily in uncoded form. In the 1830s and 1840s the flood of *ghazals* written by second- and third-rate poets grew to such an extent that Karl Immermann, sober and critical as ever, satirized these authors with his famous lines:

Von den Früchten, die sie aus dem Gartenhain von Schiras stehlen,
essen sie zu viel, die Armen, und vomieren dann Ghaselen.
(They eat too much of the fruits they steal from Shiraz's orchard
and then vomit *ghazals*.)

Yet, despite this verdict the *ghazal* remained a legitimate German poetic form and was used, though sparsely, by many later German poets and is still being used by orientalists, especially when translating Persian poetry or composing orientalizing verses.

While the delightful form of the *ghazal* became part and parcel of the German poetic tradition, it never took root in Britain. The few attempts made to translate Persian poetry into English *ghazals* do not sound very poetic, and the Scottish clergyman William Hastie's translation into English *ghazals* of Rückert's free rendering of Rūmī's verse lacks charm.⁴³ It is, however important that this English version was meant, according to the translator's statement, to be an antidote against the dangerous philosophy expressed in Omar Khayyām's *Rubā'īyyāt*.

It is this work which really colored the understanding of the English reading public and offered a picture of the carefree but at the same time deeply pessimistic approach to life that was thought to be typical of the Persian tradition. Anyone who has tried to wade through Potter's bibliography of the *Rubā'īyyāt* (updated in Ehsan Yarshater's *Persian Literature*) is astounded by the amount of translations into the most diverse languages from Eskimo to Yiddish, from Malay to Portuguese. It shows the popularity of Omar Khayyām's verse in Fitzgerald's version that in Mirzā Qalīch Beg's Sindhi adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* the hero is made to recite some of Omar Khayyām's *Rubā'īyyāt* in Sindhi, taken not from the original (although Mirzā Qalīch Beg was a scholar of Persian), but from Fitzgerald's version.

Just as in Germany Hāfiz lent his name to numerous poems which are often far removed from the original spirit, the *Rubā'īyyāt* were imitated time and again in the English-speaking world – everyone

⁴³ (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1903).

seemed to be reciting such quatrains, down to the delightful *Rubā'īyyāt of a Persian Kitten* by Oliver Herford (New York, 1905), concerning a kitten that longs for the sole being freed from the fetters of the refrigerator rather than for the soul to be freed from its material body . . .

At the same time, however, orientalists began serious work on Persian poetry. Critical studies were and still are being prepared, and the studies of scholars like Wilhelm Eilers and Benedikt Reinert on the theory of the Persian *rubā'ī*, crowned by Fritz Meier's masterful work on the first poetess of Iran, *Die schöne Mahsati*, and her contributions to the development of the quatrain have contributed to a large extent to our understanding of the technical aspects of the favorite form that was used, from early times, in the *samā'* sessions of the Sufis.⁴⁴

The development of the scholarly approach to Persian poetry left less room for poetical renderings of Persian verse than before, and the personality of Friedrich Rückert, who combined great erudition in philology and poetical talent, is unique in the history of Western adaptation of Persian forms and compositions, great though the number of first-class orientalists in Britain, Germany, France, and other countries (Czechoslovakia, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and many more) may have been and still is. The prevailing tendency in the Anglo-Saxon world is to render the delicate Persian verses into modern – often all too modern – forms, employing images that contradict the cultural traditions of the Islamic and the Persian world, and the seemingly endless discussion of the real form and meaning of Hāfiz's poetry could be, if not ended, at least facilitated by one single look at Goethe's definition of the *ghazal*, or at some of Rückert's *Östliche Rosen*.

In many of these songs Rückert has pointed to the secret of Persian poetry, and to me, a simple – almost all too simple – poem in the collection just mentioned captures the soul and spirit of Persian poetry with its employment of classical Persian imagery:

Was steht denn auf den hundert Blättern
der Rose all?
Was sagt denn tausendfaches Schmetterlein
der Nachtigall?

⁴⁴ Wilhelm Eilers, "Vierzeilerdichtung, persisch und außerpersisch," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 6 (1969), pp. 209–59; Benedikt Reinert, "Die prosodische Unterschiedlichkeit von persischem und arabischem Rubā'ī," in Richard Gramlich, ed., *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen, Fritz Meier gewidmet* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975), pp. 205–25; Fritz Meier, *Die schöne Mahsati* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1963).

What's written on the hundred petals
of roses all?
What sings in thousand repetitions
the nightingale?

And Rückert answers these rhetorical questions (which play on the pun of the hundred-petaled centifolia and the thousand, *hazār*, songs of the nightingale, *hazār*) by telling his readers that Beauty has drawn a magic circle around itself while Love does not know of any other circle either, and thus, on every petal the same truth is written as on the first one while every nightingale repeats the longing songs uttered by the bird's first song.

Understanding this secret, the reader of Persian poetry will find the reflection of the eternal interplay of rose and nightingale, of Beauty and Love, wherever he looks: the rose in the garden brings the fragrance of the heavenly rosegarden and, with its red color, reminds the spectator of the radiant ruby red of the *ridā al-kibriyā*, the cloak of Divine Glory – and yet it is the lovely flower that can be touched, smelled, and held and will wither all too soon . . . while the nightingale is the symbol of the soul that expresses its longing for the eternal Beauty in ever new melodies, speaking of the never-ending road to fulfillment, and can be enjoyed, at the same time, as the lively bird that both gladdens and saddens the listener's heart.

Persian poetry is filled with pairs like the rose and the nightingale, and when the nightingale's longing is endless, so is the moth's wish to cast itself into the flame and immolate itself to reach union with the highest goal. Whether Farhād and Shīrīn, whether Maḥmūd and Ayāz or Majnūn and Lailā, Yūsuf and Zulaikhā – they all express the same longing for the last union that can be reached only through suffering.

But it is the story of moth and candle, found first in the *Kitāb at-tawāsīn* of the martyr mystic al-Hallāj (d. 922) and then taken over by the poets of Iran and Turkey, that forms the bridge between the poetic worlds of Iran and Germany. Goethe found it in a translation of Persian verses and transformed it into one of the most profound poems in the German language, *Selige Sehnsucht* (*Blessed Longing*). "Stirb und werde," "Die and become," is Goethe's advice to the reader in this poem,⁴⁵ and this idea of dying and being reborn on ever rising levels of existence permeates large parts of classical Persian poetry. It is the song of the never-ending quest, the fulfillment of Love

⁴⁵ Hans Heinrich Schaeder, "Die persische Vorlage von Goethes Seliger Sehnsucht," *Festschrift für Eduard Spranger* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1942).

through suffering and death, expressed in images of the journey through mountains and deserts to end only in paradise, as Goethe says at the end of the *Book of Paradise* in the *West-östlicher Divan*:

Bis im Anschau ew'ger Liebe
wir verschweben, wir verschwinden . . .

Contemplating Love eternal
we float higher and dissolve . . .

4 · Ideas of time in Persian mysticism

GERHARD BÖWERING

Yale University

In Chapter 1 Professor Ehsan Yarshater, distinguished recipient of the Giorgio Levi Della Vida Award, painted a magnificent tableau of the Persian presence in the Islamic world. With bold strokes he has sketched the contours of Persian civilization over the centuries and opened a vista into the Persian treasures that have enriched the world of Islam. As this group of colleagues focuses expert scrutiny on the vast mosaic of Persian culture, I have the pleasure of polishing a small stone in the brilliant picture that the Persian genius has created in the Islamic world.

For more than a millennium, mysticism – Sufism in particular, but also Ismāʿīlī and Imāmī gnosis – has shaped the vision of Islam. In the realm of mysticism, more than in many other domains of Islamic culture, the Persians¹ have been at work creating the inner religious sphere of Islam. To this day Persian images are anchored in the minds of Muslims throughout the world as a goad to poetic inspiration, and Persian ideas are stored in the inner recesses of Muslim hearts as a source of spiritual aspiration. Even the stridently puritanical reductionism of some contemporary Muslims acknowledges, albeit in

¹ In accordance with the example of Professor Yarshater "Persia" and "Persian(s)" are used as general terms for what are also called "Iran" and "Iranian(s)." The terms "Persia" and "Persian(s)" are not restricted to their linguistic or geographical connotations, but are understood in their full ethnic and cultural extension. The abbreviations of journal titles follow J. D. Pearson, *Index Islamicus* (London, 1958). *EI* (reprint 1987) stands for *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. M. T. Houtsma et al. (Leiden, 1913–38; reprint Leiden, 1987), *EI* (new edition) for *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. (Leiden, 1960–), *EIr* for *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater (New York 1982–), *ER* for *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade (New York, 1987) and *ERE* for *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings (Edinburgh, 1908–26; reprint New York, 1980). Koran quotations are inserted into the main body of the text, with chapter and verse placed in brackets and separated by a colon. For convenient reference, the Arabic definite article and the Persian *idāfa* have been omitted before the *nisha* (names of persons denoting descent or origin) by which a person is principally quoted.

oblique ways, the strength Persian mysticism has injected into the hearts of many Muslim men and women. Indeed, Islamic fundamentalism, from Morocco to Mindanao, lives in fear of a resurgent Persian-inspired religiosity establishing a strong hold on the future of Islam.

It has become customary in the scholarly world to celebrate the spirit of Persian mysticism by citing innumerable examples of beautiful Persian verse from the glorious *divāns* and by tracing fascinating symbols of Iranian religions in the profundity of Persian prose. Today, I suggest another approach based mainly on Sufi sources written in Arabic, that other linguistic medium that one might also follow which the Persian authors controlled with such consummate skill. It may be appropriate to take a fresh look at the beauty of Persian mysticism and to select a new road into the depths of Persian religiosity by examining the idea of time that propelled Sufism throughout the history of Islam. In its conception of time, Persian mysticism manifests an astonishing capability of integrating a wide spectrum of cultures and an uncanny aptitude for articulating its own vision of the world.

Time strikes us as mysteriously slipping away and continually eluding the grasp of our consciousness.² Time makes us feel that the present is real while the past and the future are not. The past has ceased to exist and the future has not yet come to be. Then again, here and now, we observe one thing beside the other and experience one event after another. We have come to accept a flux of time from the past to the future flowing through the elusive "now" of the moment. Although able to affect the future, we cannot change the past. We

² There are numerous studies on time from philosophical and historical perspectives as well as from cross-cultural points of view. Entries on 'time' can, of course, be found in any standard encyclopedia. The list that follows enumerates only a very small number of studies that have been consulted for the background of this chapter: M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York 1954); *Man and Time: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, Bollingen Series XXX.3 (Princeton, 1957); S. J. Samartha, *The Hindu View of History* (Bangalore, 1959); S. G. F. Brandon, *History, Time and Deity* (Manchester, 1965); J. T. Fraser, *The Voices of Time* (New York, 1966); R. M. Gale (ed.), *The Philosophy of Time* (London, 1968); H. I. Marrou, *Théologie de l'histoire* (Paris, 1968); S. Sambursky and S. Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism* (Jerusalem, 1971); J. T. Fraser (ed.), *The Study of Time* (4 vols., New York, 1972–81); *Cultures and Time* (Paris, 1976); *Time and the Philosophies* (Paris, 1977); P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago, 1984); S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York, 1988). A good select bibliography is found at the end of J. J. C. Smart's article "Time," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards, VIII (New York, 1967), pp. 133–34. A rather exhaustive bibliography is J. T. Fraser, "A Report on the Literature of Time, 1900–1980," in *The Study of Time IV*, ed. J. T. Fraser (New York, 1981), pp. 234–70.

neither possess the power to capture the present in the instant nor have the skill to snare duration by reaching into eternity. Educated in a culture formed by Christianity, we have a legacy of our own thinking about time. In it we find Augustine's puzzle about time and its measure as well as the widespread perception of time as a myth of passage, as a stream that flows or as an ocean over which we advance. Some of us may be familiar with the notion of space-time and Einstein's relativity, others may be attracted by theories of infinity and the continuum, and others again may be aware of the antinomy Kant constructed about time. More recently some have come to think about time as the fourth dimension or envision the apparent temporal asymmetry of the universe, while others are attracted by ideas of big bang, black holes, and string theory. Yet even as heirs of a different cultural tradition, we share the common human experience of time with the world of Islam and the mystics it generated. Like our culture, Islamic culture developed its own theories about time over a long history.³ The world of Islam advanced a great variety of theories explaining time, and Muslim mysticism in particular blended seemingly contradictory conceptions of the temporal into an integrated understanding of human experience. In examining some of these conceptions our focus will be on the Persian mystics of the Islamic world and their thinking within the wider framework of Islamic ideas of time.⁴

³ A good example of a contemporary Muslim's combining of Western ideas on time with certain Islamic notions is A. Ahmad, *Change, Time and Causality: With Special Reference to Muslim Thought* (Lahore, 1974).

⁴ There is no scholarly monograph on time in Islam or on time in Islamic mysticism. S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomlehre* (Gräfenhainichen, 1936), and *Nouvelles Etudes sur Avhad al-zamān Abu-l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī* (Paris, 1955), include ground-breaking observations on "time" in Islam. E. Behler, *Die Ewigkeit der Welt* (Munich, 1965), offers a thorough historical analysis of the controversy on the beginnings of the world and its eternity in Arabic and Jewish medieval philosophy. Some helpful specific articles on aspects of "time" in Islam are: L. Massiglion, "Le Temps dans la pensée islamique," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch XX* (1951) (Zurich, 1952), pp. 144-48; reprinted in *Opera Minora*, ed. Y. Moubarac (Beirut, 1963), vol. II, pp. 606-12; translated into English by R. Manheim, "Time in Islamic Thought," in *Man and Time: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, Bollingen Series XXX.3 (Princeton, 1957), pp. 108-14; H. Corbin, "Le Temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et dans l'ismaélisme," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch XX* (1951); translated into English by R. Manheim, "Cyclical time in Mazdaism and Ismailism," in *Man and Time: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, Bollingen Series XXX.3 (Princeton, 1957), pp. 115-72; reprinted in H. Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London, 1983), pp. 1-58; and L. Gardet, "Moslem Views of Time and History," in *Cultures and Time* (Paris, 1976), pp. 197-214. An ethnological perspective is offered by D. Eickelmann, "Time in a Complex Society: A Moroccan Example," *Ethnology*, 16 (1977), pp. 39-55. Only limited information can be culled from L. Gardet, "The Prophet," in *Time and the Philosophies*, ed. H. Aguessy et al.

When the Arabs conquered Iran, bringing the pre-Islamic Arab tradition of the *gāhiliyya*,⁵ the message of the Koran, and the customs of the Medinan community with them, the Persians met a people with a conception of time rooted in the experience of *dahr*, the infinite extension of time which, like the desert wind, erases footprints in the sand that stretches to the horizon. In old Arab poetry this *dahr*, also called the "days" or the "nights," is seen as an almost mythical being of all-devouring time, the cause of earthly happiness and especially of earthly misery. It is doom of death (*himām*, *maniyya*) and measure of destiny (*qadar*, *qadā*). Time is always shifting; it changes everything, and nothing resists it. Time is a manifestation of fate (*manūn*) whose destructive power the Meccans wished on Muhammad: "He is a poet for whom we await fate's uncertainty (*rayb al-manūn*)" (52:30; cf. 23:25). As the assigned lot of destiny approaching the inescapable hour of death, time expressed the transience of everything, brought good tribal fortune, or caused the death of a relative or friend.⁶ Like a sure arrow, *dahr* never missed the mark. However, *dahr* was punctuated by the Days of the Arabs (*ayyām al-'Arab*),⁷ the days of vengeance in combat and tribal prowess, when memorable events placed markers in the recollection of the course of events, good and bad. While *dahr* held sway like fate, it could be transcended by a moment marked out in tribal memory, often preserved in poetry as one of the days that captured the minds of men. The *gāhiliyya* view of time is rejected in the Koran and branded as an expression of Arab disbelief: "There is nothing but our present life; we die, and we live, and nothing but time (*dahr*) destroys

(Paris, 1977), pp. 197-209; A. Hasnaoui, "Certain Notions of Time in Arab-Muslim Philosophy," in *Time and the Philosophies* (Paris, 1977), pp. 49-79; and S. L. Goldman, "On the Beginnings and Endings of Time in Medieval Judaism and Islam," in *The Study of Time IV*, ed. J. T. Fraser (New York, 1981), pp. 59-72.

⁵ The term *gāhiliyya*, used as the opposite of the word *islām*, refers to the life and lore of the Arabs before Muhammad's mission as Prophet; see T. Nöldeke, "Arabs (Ancient)," *ERE*, I, pp. 659-73; "Djāhiliyya," *EI* (new edition), II, pp. 383-84.

⁶ W. M. Watt, "Dahr," *EI* (new edition), II, pp. 94-95; T. Nöldeke, "Vorstellungen der Araber vom Schicksal," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, 3 (1885), pp. 130-35; W. L. Schrammeyer, *Über den Fatalismus der vorislamischen Araber* (Bonn, 1881); C. J. Lyall, *Translation of Ancient Arabian Poetry*, *Chieffy Prae-Islamic, with an Introduction and Notes* (London, 1885); J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (Berlin, 1897); W. Caskel, *Das Schicksal in der altarabischen Poesie* (Leipzig, 1926); J. Pedersen, "The Islamic Preacher: wā'iz, mudhakkir, qāss," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial*, I (Budapest, 1948), pp. 226-51; H. Ringgren, *Studies in Arabian Fatalism* (Uppsala, 1955); "Islamic Fatalism," in *Fatalistic Beliefs*, ed. H. Ringgren (Stockholm, 1967); H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 43-44.

⁷ E. Mittwoch, "Ayyām al-'Arab," *EI* (new edition), I, pp. 793-94; W. Caskel, "Ajjām al-'Arab," *Islamica* 3 supplement (1930), pp. 1-99.

us" (45:24). In the *gāhiliyya* there was neither resurrection nor life after death.

The Koranic message opposed this fatalistic view and explained time from the perspective of a transcendent monotheism promising paradise and warning of hell. The Koran countered the Days of the Arabs with the Days of God (*ayyām Allāh*). Moses, sent with "Our (God's) signs (*bi-āyātina*)," was commanded, "bring forth your people from the shadows to the light and remind them of the Days of God (*dakkirhum bi-ayyāmi'llāh*)" (14:5). Muḥammad's own followers, the believers, are bidden to forgive "those who do not look for the Days of God (*ayyām Allāh*)" (45:14). Just as the old Arabs had their days of vengeance, so God had His days of punishment.⁸ The Koran also revealed God's creative command (*amr*), His *kun* ("Be!"): "When He decrees a thing, He but says to it 'Be!', and it is (*kun fa-yakūn*)" (2:117; 3:47; 19:35; 40:68; cf. 16:40; 36:82). God gave this command of creation when He formed the first human being (3:59) and made the heavens and the earth (6:73), fashioning them in six days (7:54; 10:3; 11:7; 25:59; 32:4; 50:38; 57:4).⁹ "His are the creation (*qalq*) and the command (*amr*)" (7:54). God is not only Creator at the beginning of creation and at the origin of a person's life; He is also Judge at the end of the world and at the individual's death when mankind will hear "the Cry in truth" (50:42). In the final "Hour" (*sā'ā*), the only perfect moment that there is, the divine command is revealed in "the twinkling of an eye" (*lamḥ al-baṣar*, 54:50; cf. 16:77) and "the whole earth shall be His handful and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand" (39:67).

There is no place in the Koran for impersonal time; man's destiny is in the hands of God, who creates male and female, gives life and brings death, and grants wealth and works destruction (53:44-54). God is active even in a person's sleep, for "God takes the souls unto Himself (*yatawaffā al-anfus*) at the time of their death, and that which has not died, in its sleep. He keeps those on whom He has decreed death, but looses the others till a stated term (*aḡal musammā*)" (39:42). Unless He has decreed a person's death, God sends back the soul and the person wakes up. The divine command rules all of human life and resembles a judicial decision, proclaiming God's decree (*ḥukm*) with authority and stating the instant that releases the acts

⁸ These days of divine punishment were the Arabicized "Wars of the Lord" (*milḥamāt Jhwāh*) of the Old Testament (Num. 21:14); see J. Horowitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1926), p. 22.

⁹ The same imperative in the feminine form *kūnī* ("Be!") is used when God commanded the fire to be coolness for Abraham (21:69).

humans perform. Man's life (and hence human action) begins with the announcement of the divine *kun* and comes to an end at the "stated term" (*aḡal*, 40:69; *aḡal musammā*, 39:42),¹⁰ as the irrevocable period of life assigned by God comes to an end at the moment of divine sanction. This appointed term of man's life is fixed; it can neither be anticipated nor deferred: "No one has his life prolonged and no one has his life cut short except as [it is written] in a book [of God's decrees]" (35:12). The image-rich promise of man's new creation beyond time in paradise heightened the awareness that nothing escapes the grasp of God's perpetual presence. From the *kun* of his creation to the *aḡal* of his death, man's existence falls under the *ḥukm* of God, which occurs instantaneously in time spans expressed in the Koran by the terms of *ḥīn* and *ān* (*ḥīn*: 21:111; 26:218; 37:114; 37:178; *ān*: 16:22). *Ḥīn* appears more frequently and is set explicitly in relation to *dahr* in the rhetorical question, "Wasn't there a time span (*ḥīn min ad-dahr*) for man when he was as yet nothing to be mentioned?" (76:1). In the Koran, Allāh is the Lord of the instant; what He has determined happens.

Islamic tradition (*ḥadīṭ*) amplified the notion of divine determination included in the Koran, and tended to transform Muḥammad's stress on divine omnipotence into a rigid predeterminism, while also identifying time, *dahr*, with God. This identification of Allāh and *dahr* can be traced back to an important *ḥadīṭ* report in which God is the speaker (*ḥadīṭ qudsī*). "God said: Man insults Me in blaming time (*dahr*); I am time (*anā ad-dahr*). In My hands is the command (*amr*), and I cause the alternation of night and day."¹¹ The Prophet warned against blaming disappointment on time: "Do not say, what a disappointment of time (*lā taqūlū kaybata ad-dahr*), because God Himself is time (*fa-inna Allāha huwa ad-dahr*)."¹² Later, the Zāhirī

¹⁰ I. Goldziher and W. M. Watt, "Adjal," *EI* (new edition), I, p. 204; cf. G. Weil, *Maimonides über die Lebensdauer* (Basle, 1953); R. Eklund, *Life Between Death and Resurrection According to Islam* (Uppsala, 1941).

¹¹ A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (8 vols., Leiden, 1936-88), I, pp. 50, 101; II, p. 155 (Bukārī, *Tafsīr* 45:1, *Tawḥīd*, p. 35; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Alfāz*, pp. 2, 3; Dārimī, *Adab*, p. 169; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, II, pp. 238, 272). This tradition is very old and exemplifies the merger of the Koranic with the *gāhiliyya* world-view in *ḥadīṭ*; cf. Abū Bakr 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubayr Humaydī, *al-Musnad*, ed. Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān al-A'zamī (Beirut, 1409/1988), no. 1096; see also R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 155.

¹² Wensinck, *Concordance*, II, pp. 92, 155 (Bukārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Adab*, p. 101; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Alfāz*, p. 4; Mālik b. Anas, *Muwatta'*, *Kalām*, p. 3; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, II, pp. 259, 272, 275, 318, 934); Abū Muḥammad al-Husayn b. Mas'ūd Bagāwī, *Misbāḥ as-sunna* (4 vols., Beirut, 1407/1987), III, p. 305 (no. 3700); J. Robson, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* (Lahore, 1975), p. 996; the variant, "time itself is God" (*fa-inna ad-dahr huwa Allāh*), is also quoted by Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣā'ir wa-aḡ-ḡaḡā'ir*, ed. W. Qāḡī (Beirut, 1408/1988), V, p. 141.

school interpreted time (*dahr*) as an actual attribute of God.¹³ A tradition going back to Abū Idrīs Kawlānī (d. 80/699) may conceal the roots of this strand of *ḥadīṭ* in God's address to Moses, "O Moses, the first thing I created is that in which I resolved within Myself the decree and determination of all things: time (*dahr*)."¹⁴

Another strand of *ḥadīṭ* literature records that everything that happens is written in a heavenly book: "God wrote down the decrees (*maqādir*) regarding the created world fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth."¹⁵ According to other *ḥadīṭ* God commanded the Pen (*qalam*), the first thing He created, to write down the destinies of all things, thus establishing His unalterable decree. While the embryo is still in the womb, an angel writes down the child's daily sustenance, its works, its hour of death, and its misery or happiness (in this life and/or life to come?).¹⁶ God's decree is invariably fulfilled; though prayer may ward it off for a while, no human effort can change it.¹⁷ Combining pre-Islamic notions of all-pervading time with the idea of God's decree in the Koran, the *ḥadīṭ* saw time as a series of predetermined events binding divine omnipotence to the certain occurrence of each instant in a person's life span. Though such occurrence was as unavoidable as fate and as irreversible as time, it happened through God's very own action alone.¹⁸

Islamic law (*fiqh*) captured time in the stipulations of ritual precision while adopting its measure from old Arab custom as sanctioned in the Koran. The Koran expressly confirmed the moon as the measurer of time: "It is He [God] who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light. And He determined it [the moon] by stations that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning (*ḥisāb*)" (10:5). The day began at nightfall, when the sun set, going to its resting place (*mustaqarr*, 36:38; cf. 18:86), and the month was reckoned from the actual sighting of the new moon (*ḥilāl*).¹⁹ The appearance of the crescent in the sky determined the date of the pilgrimage (*ḥaǧǧ*) and the

end of the month of fasting (2:183–84, 189). The exact times of prayer (*ṣalāt*), however, were fixed after Muḥammad's death by times of the day determined by the sun, such as the night prayer when the twilight disappeared, the morning prayer at daybreak, the midday prayer when the sun began to decline from the zenith, the afternoon prayer when the shadows matched their objects, and the evening prayer immediately after sunset.²⁰

While dependence on the lunar calendar and the times of ritual prayer provided rhythm to a Muslim's daily life, the law followed the Koranic summons to give witness (*ṣahāda*) to the divine signs (*āyāt*) that established events in time. On account of this strong sense of witness the law favored methods of measuring time by observation over calculation. It was crucial for legal procedure that testimony be given by a free and mentally able Muslim with a record of moral rectitude (*ʿaddala*) who was an actual eye- or ear-witness (*ṣāhid*) to the evidence of a crime at the time of its occurrence. Documentary evidence was generally disregarded as testimonial proof.²¹ The law (*ṣarīʿa*) as a system of religious duties with its framework of five basic categories (*aḥkām*), ranging from obligation through indifference to prohibition, derived its validity from its timeless existence but elaborated many rules by a casuistical method over a long period of time. Time played an important role with regard to legal terms, as seen in two examples. Divorce in its strict three-fold form was an irrevocable legal act, but in its simple form it could be revoked within a specified time. On a widow or a divorced woman the law imposed a waiting-period (*ʿidda*) of abstention from sexual relations (three menstrual periods, an interval of similar duration in months and days, or childbirth) as the term of expiry.

The Koranic concept of history revolved around prophetic figures, from Adam to Muḥammad. It was a typological view of history with a recurring pattern of events focused on the prophets of old, such as Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus, as well as heroes of Arab lore.²² And religion itself, active submission to God (*islām*), had its peaceful pace ruptured by the struggle for dominion (*ǧihād*) in the path of God. With the establishment of an empire by conquest, Islam acquired a dynamic sense of history and began dating events from the *hiǧra*, Muḥammad's emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE.²³

²⁰ A. J. Wensinck, "Mikāt," *EI* (reprint 1987), V, pp. 492–93.

²¹ J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964).

²² The basic framework of the Koranic view of typological history has been surveyed by R. Paret, *Mohammed und der Koran* (Stuttgart, 1957), pp. 81–92.

²³ W. M. Watt, "Hidjra," *EI* (new edition), III, pp. 366–67.

¹³ I. Goldziher, *Die Zāhiriten, ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 153–54; W. M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London, 1948), p. 31.

¹⁴ Abd al-ǧabbār Kawlānī, *Taʾrīḥ Darāyā*, ed. Saʿīd al-Aḥḡānī (Damascus, 1975; repr. 1984), p. 65. ¹⁵ Ringgren, *Studies*, p. 117. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 117–18.

¹⁷ Ringgren, "Islamic Fatalism," in *Fatalistic Beliefs*, pp. 57–59.

¹⁸ For the implications of these strands of *ḥadīṭ* and their *isnāds* on Islamic doctrines of predestination, see J. van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṭ und Theologie* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 75–81.

¹⁹ W. Hartner, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, pp. 1209–12; J. Schacht and R. Ettinghausen, "Ḥilāl," *EI* (new edition), III, pp. 379–85; D. Pingree, "Kamar," *EI* (new edition), III, pp. 517–18.

thus placing the record of history (*ta'rikh*)²⁴ under God's continually sustained direction. Although other calendars, such as the Coptic, the Persian, and the Turkish calendars, and other world eras, such as those of creation, the deluge, and Alexander, were known to Islam,²⁵ it was *ta'rikh*, embracing annalistic and biographical history, that formed the heart of Muslim historical writing and replaced the legends and popular traditions of an earlier age.

Islam not only began to develop a sense of genuine history and to embody a great variety of images of time in its literatures;²⁶ it also adopted a philosophy of time by integrating the legacy of the Greeks and the Persians. The general term for time, used in Arabic translations from Pahlavi, is *zamān*.²⁷ The term corresponds to *Zurwān*, the name of a deity who is father of twins, "luminous and perfumed" Ohrmazd and "dark and malodorous" Ahriman. The first was born of the sacrifice Zurwān performed in order to have a son, who would create heaven and earth; the second was born of the doubts with which Zurwān was assailed while performing the rite. Ahriman, the first the light of day, was given sovereignty for a limited time. At its end Ohrmazd, the son for whom Zurwān had offered the sacrifice, would assume absolute rule.²⁸ This myth captured the concept of time

²⁴ H. A. R. Gibb, "Ta'rikh," *EI* (reprint 1987), Suppl., pp. 231–45; for a thorough analysis of Muslim views of history see F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd revised ed. (Leiden, 1968), especially pp. 3–197.

²⁵ The standard reference to Muslim calendars is B. Spuler and J. Mayr, *Wüstenfeld-Mahler'sche Vergleichungs-Tabellen* (Wiesbaden, 1961). For general remarks on Muslim views of world eras, see B. Carra de Vaux, "Ta'rikh," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, p. 672.

²⁶ The scope of "time" in Arabic and Persian poetry and *belles-lettres*, which cannot be analyzed here, is wide. It ranges from the tyranny of time in the *Thousand and One Nights* (see Ringgren, *Studies*, pp. 201–203; E. W. Lane, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (New York, 1927) to the *carpe diem* of the *Quatrains* of 'Umar Ḳayyām (d. 526/1132), who challenged the great chess player Heaven with the attitude, "I never worried about two days, the day that has not yet come and the day that has gone by" (see A. Christensen, *Recherches sur les Rubā'iyāt de 'Umar Ḳayyām* (Heidelberg, 1905), p. 112. A divergent example is the time concept of Abū'l-'Alā' Ahmad b. 'Abdallāh Ma'arrī (d. 449/1058) as explained by Nicholson: "Time, being independent of the revolutions of the celestial spheres, does not affect the course of events, which (indirectly, at any rate) is determined by the everchanging position of the planets relatively to one another. Time brings nothing to pass; it is, so to speak, the neutral, unconscious atmosphere of all action and suffering." R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 156; see also p. 59, n. 1.

²⁷ T. DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, p. 1207–1209.

²⁸ H. S. Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes," *JA* 214 (1929), pp. 193–310; *JA* 219 (1931), pp. 1–134; 193–244; H. H. Schaefer, "Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythos," *ZDMG*, 95 (1941), pp. 268–99; A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen, 1944); R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955); M. Molé, "Le problème zurvanite," *JA* 247 (1959), pp. 431–69; G. Gnoli, "L'Evolution du dualisme iranien et le problème

in Mazdaism that distinguishes between eternal time without origin (*zurwān ī akanārag*) and bounded or finite time (*zurwān ī derang khwadāy*). It implied, as Corbin has argued, the essential Mazdean view of time as the time of a Gnostic return to an eternal origin, not as that of an eternally returning time.²⁹ In a detailed analysis, Ringgren has shown the large extent to which the Persian epics, and with them Persian culture since before the Arab conquest, are permeated by the idea of all-pervading time and irreversible fate. In the epics, time plays a central role as the course of events determined by the revolving sky (*āsmān*, *sipīhr*, *čark*, *falak*, *gumbad*, *gardūn*), the power of human destiny (*rūzgār*, *zamān*, *zamānah*, *dahr*), and the lot of man's fortune (*baḳt*).³⁰ Both the Persian lore of the epics and the religion of Mazdaism, the only non-biblical tradition in substantial contact with Islam in its early centuries, affected ideas of time formed by Islam in later centuries.

The most common Islamic term for time, *zamān*, remained unknown to the Koran, as did *qīdam*,³¹ its counterpart for eternity. The Arab lexicographers, however, had a great variety of terms for time. In general, they distinguished *dahr*, time from the beginning of the world to its end, from *zamān*, a long time having beginning and end; *asr*, a span of time; *hīn*, a period of time, little or much; *dawām*, duration, *mudda*, a space of duration; *waqt*, a moment in time; *ān*, present time; *awān*, time or season; *yawm*, a time, whether night or day; and *sā'a*, a time of night or day, a while. *Abad* was duration without end and *azal* duration without beginning, to which *qīdam*, time without beginning, corresponded in its primary sense as distinct from *sarmad*, incessant continuance, whereas *kulūd*, perpetual existence, was implicit in the Koranic *yawm al-kulūd*, day of eternity (50:34), the entrance to *dār al-kulūd*, paradise. It is obvious that these distinctions do not reflect a quasi-technical usage of each term to the exclusion of others, but rather an approximately predominant meaning that often blends with the neighboring terms in the actual literary use.³² When it came to translating Greek philosophical texts into Arabic, the most commonly employed correspondences were

zurvanite," *RHR* 201 (1984), pp. 115–38; G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes* (Paris, 1974).

²⁹ Corbin, "Cyclical Time," in *Man and Time*, pp. 115–72.

³⁰ H. Ringgren, *Fatalism in Persian Epics* (Uppsala, 1952); see also I. Scheftelowitz, *Die Zeit als Schicksalsgottheit in der indischen und iranischen Religion (Kāla und Zurwān)* (Stuttgart, 1929).

³¹ R. Arnaldez, "Kidām," *EI* (new edition), V, pp. 95–99.

³² For details on these terms, see, e.g., E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93).

chronos, translated by *zamān*, *aīn* by *dahr*, *kairos* by *waqt*, and *diastasis* by *mudda*.³³

Through the exposure to Greek thought, the philosophers of Islam became familiar with two powerful and mutually opposed philosophical notions of time. Those who followed the Aristotelian view (beginning with Ya'qūb b. Ishāq Kindī, d. about 252/866) saw time as an accident of motion and defined it as the number, measure, or quantity (*'adad*, *miqdār*, *kamiyya*) of motion according to "before" and "after" (in the first place as a number of movement of the celestial spheres). On the basis of this definition, Aristotle had attempted to prove the eternity of the universe from the nature of time. In the Plotinian concept (going back to Plato's image of time as emblem of eternity and espoused by the *Rasā'il* of the *Iḳwān as-safā'*, written about 350/961–375/986), time has no extra-mental reality since it is viewed as the stream of consciousness of a thinking mind and defined as a duration (*mudda*, *imtidād*, *maḍā'*) that exists independently of motion as a quality of mind. That also meant that time did not come into existence with the creation of the universe, but existed from eternity as the duration of God's infinite consciousness.³⁴

The Muslim philosophers adopted the term *abad* for eternity *a parte post* (Middle Persian *a-pād*, "without foot," i.e. end; Greek *ateleuton*, "without end") in opposition to *azal*, eternity *a parte ante* (Pahlavi *a-sar*, "without head," i.e., beginning; Greek *anarchon*, "without beginning"), cognizant of the parallel philosophical usage of Greek, *aphtharton* (incorruptible) versus *agenēton* (ungenerated). They followed the Aristotelian maxim that *azal* and *abad* imply each other, that what has a beginning must have an end, and what has no beginning cannot have an end; thus time is eternal in both directions. The theologians of Islam, on the other hand, acknowledged only one assumption: an eternal God and a temporal world. They argued that time came into existence with the creation of the universe. Since God is absolutely incorporeal, He existed alone in timeless eternity prior to creation and has no relation to motion and consequently none to time. They offered a convoluted argument for the temporal creation of the world. If the world were without a beginning, at the present moment an infinite past would have been traversed – this is impossible. There is no such impossibility in the future since no infinite will ever be traversed. Parallel forms of argumentation would assert that a series of integers needs a first term but no final one, and a man may

³³ S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 49–51 (Ibn Sīnā [d. 428/1037] refines the terminology by the distinction of *zamān*, *dahr*, and *sarmad*).

³⁴ DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, pp. 1207–1209.

have eternal remorse although his remorse must have a beginning. Muslim theologians detected no rational proof for the incorruptibility of the world or its opposite and deemed it possible that the universe would be annihilated. This world (*dunyā*) will be destroyed, but not heaven and hell.³⁵

While Muslim notions of time oscillated between Aristotelian motion and Plotinian duration, it was the atomism of Democritus that appealed most strongly to the creators of normative Islamic theology. Atomism offered a concept of time which conceived of it as composed of a finite number of time-atoms or instants which are real entities. These atomic instants (*ānāt*, *awqāt*), are not mental states but a constellation or galaxy of instants, paralleling an atomistic concept of space consisting only of mathematical points. Atomism describes reality as consisting of indivisible and irreducible atoms with concomitant accidents. The atoms and their accidents exist only for an instant. In every instant, God is thus creating the world anew; there are no intermediate causes, and God can be thought of as continually creating the universe from nothing.³⁶ Turning Greek "materialistic" atomism upside down (the Greeks defined nature through the monad, while the theologians anchored creation in God's persistent power), the Mu'tazila and Aṣ'ariyya made atomism an instrument of divine omnipotence and providence and held that each moment within time is the direct creation of the eternally active God.³⁷ Of itself, creation is discontinuous; it appears continuous only because of God's compassionate consistency. Atomism not only was most congenial to a vision of God acting instantaneously in the world as the sole true cause, but also proved most closely akin to Arabic grammar. In Arabic, verbal tenses are not understood as states but as verbal aspects – complete (*al-māḍī*) and incomplete (*al-muḍāri*) – marking,

³⁵ S. van den Bergh, "Abad," *EI* (new edition), I, p. 2. A controversial attitude to physical time and space is also included in the conceptions of motion (*haraka*) and rest (*sukūn*) advanced by Muslim philosophers and theologians (see R. Arnaldez, "Haraka wa-Sukūn," *EI* [new edition], III, pp. 169–72). The difference of views between Mu'ammār b. 'Abbād (d. 215/830; motion in reality is rest), and Naẓẓām (d. between 220/835 and 230/845; motion is identical with being or existence and can be explained by the idea of the "jump," *tafā*) is highlighted by H. Daiber, *Das Theologisch-philosophische System des Mu'ammār Ibn 'Abbād as-Sulamī* (Beirut, 1975), pp. 294–306.

³⁶ S. van den Bergh, "Djawhar," *EI* (new edition), II, pp. 493–94; S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin, 1936); Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," in *Man and Time*, pp. 108–14; R. M. Frank, *The Metaphysics of Created Being according to Abū'l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf* (Istanbul, 1966); C. Baffioni, *Atomismo e antiatomismo nel pensiero islamico* (Naples, 1982).

³⁷ H. S. Nyberg, "Mu'tazila," *EI* (reprint 1987), VI, pp. 787–93; J. van Ess, "Mu'tazilah," *ER*, X, pp. 220–29; R. M. Frank, "Aṣ'ariyah," *ER*, I, pp. 449–55.

outside of time, the degree to which the action has been realized. These verbal aspects are qualified by the subjective consciousness of the moment expressed by the modality of circumstance (*hāl*), while nontemporal statements are normally made without any copula.³⁸

In stark contrast to atomism stood the conception of the *Dahriyya*, a group who divinized duration.³⁹ This conception appeared to be compatible with notions of physical time that distinguished past (*mādī*), present (*hādīr*), and future (*mustaqbal*). It seemed to overcome the paradox that the present is strictly not time, while the present moment is the only real one in time. It placed time over space since space could be visualized by the point at the end of a line at rest, while time as a measure of motion flowed always on. Because Muslim belief deems only God as absolute, infinite, and eternal, the *dahrī* view of time was condemned as heresy. However, it left traces in the hermetic tradition of Islam, especially among the Ismāʿīlīs. Time figured as one of the highest principles of the world in the pentad speculations of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā Rāzī, the physician (d. 313/925): God-Creator, World-Soul, Original Matter, Absolute Space, and Absolute Time. This metaphysical pentad was mirrored by five things in the system of physics: matter, form, space, motion, and time.⁴⁰ In this way Rāzī maintained a distinction between time (*zamān*) as finite and limited (*maḥṣūr*) and duration (*mudda*, *dahr*) as infinite and absolute (*muṭlaq*).⁴¹ Since space was seen as an accident of the body and time as proceeding from the soul, Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) answered the question "Which is better, space or time?" with "Time is better, for space is of the senses, but time is spiritual; space is in the world, but time surrounds it."⁴²

Perhaps the most prominent Islamic thinker on time was the Jewish convert Abū'l-Barakāt Baghdādī (d. c. 560/1165), who defined time as "the measure of being" (*az-zamān miqdār al-wuḡūd*), not of motion, and held that the apprehension of time is anterior in the soul

³⁸ Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," in *Man and Time*, pp. 108–14.

³⁹ I. Goldziher and A. M. Goichon, "Dahriyya," *EI* (new edition), II, pp. 95–97.

⁴⁰ DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, pp. 1207–1209; Pines, *Beiträge*, pp. 34–93.

⁴¹ P. Kraus and S. Pines, "Al-Rāzī," *EI* (reprint 1987), VI, pp. 1134–36.

⁴² Abū Ḥayyān 'Alī b. Muḥammad Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, ed. H. Sandūbī (Cairo, 1929), pp. 172–73; cf. pp. 154, 278; DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, pp. 1207–1209; M. Bergé, *Pour un humanisme vécu: Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Damascus, 1979). It is not possible to develop the rich legacy of Ṣī'ī ideas on "time" in the framework of this chapter. Some basic Ṣī'ī notions are discussed by H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien* (4 vols., Paris, 1971–72); for references see IV, pp. 556–57.

to any other perception.⁴³ Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), who had been a Zāhirī for some time, was influenced by the thought of the Zāhirī school, which interpreted time (*dahr*) as an attribute of God.⁴⁴ Ibn 'Arabī described God as time (*dahr*), defined as a single day (*yawm wāḥid*) without nighttime or daytime, yet divided into many days, the "Days of God," by the properties of the divine names and attributes.⁴⁵ "Each name has days which are the time (*zamān*) of the ruling property of that name. But all names are the Days of God (*ayyām Allāh*), and all are the differentiations of time (*dahr*) in the universe by virtue of the ruling property."⁴⁶ Telescoping the technical vocabulary into one phrase, 'Alī b. Muḥammad Gurgānī (d. 816/1413) offered the simplified definition, "duration (*dahr*) is the permanent moment (*ān*) which is the expansion (*imtidād*) of the divine presence and the innermost part of time (*zamān*), in which eternity *a parte ante* and *a parte post* (*azal* and *abad*) are united."⁴⁷

In this rich cultural mix of contradictory conceptions of time and notions of history, the Persian mystics felt in their element. They tackled the paradox of the temporal and the eternal that had been left at the doorsteps of their meditation chambers by the old-Arab *dahr* and Koranic *ḥukm*, the Persian myth of time and the Gnostic return to eternal origin, motion and rest, and time-atoms and divinized duration. Sufi knowledge inherited a kaleidoscope of time that merged themes culled from literature, philosophy, theology, law, scripture, and poetry. Absorbing these themes, they discovered solutions to the paradox of time by refracting it through the prism of mystical experience. In the Sufi looking-glass time became a pattern with its pivot in ecstasy and its course of spiritual time suspended between

⁴³ S. Pines, *Nouvelles études sur Awhad al-zamān Abu-l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī* (Paris, 1955); S. Pines, "Abu'l-Barakāt," *EI* (new edition), I, pp. 111–13; DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI* (reprint 1987), VIII, pp. 1207–1209.

⁴⁴ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (4 vols., Būlāq, 1329/1911; reprint Beirut, n.d. [c. 1970]), III, pp. 315, 411; I. Goldziher, *Die Zāhiriten, ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 153–54; W. M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London, 1948), p. 31; A. E. Afifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Din Ibnul Arabi* (Lahore, 1964), pp. 44, 111–12, 186.

⁴⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, III, pp. 198, 202; cf. W. C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York, 1989), p. 395.

⁴⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, III, p. 201; cf. W. C. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, p. 395.

⁴⁷ 'Alī b. Muḥammad Gurgānī, *Kitāb al-ta'rifāt* (*A Book of Definitions*) (Beirut, 1969), p. 111 "ad-dahr huwa al-ān ad-dā'im alladī huwa imtidād al-ḥadrat al-ilāhiya wa-huwa bātin az-zamān wa-biḥi yattāhidu al-azal wa'l-abad." A great variety of Muslim notions of time are enumerated in Muḥammad 'Alī Tahānawī, *Kaṣā'if isṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, ed. Muḥammad Waḡnī, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, and Ḡulām Qādir (Calcutta, 1862; repr. Istanbul 1404/1984), pp. 61–62 (*abad*), 84–85 (*azal*, *azālī*), 393–94 (*hīn*), 479–80 (*dahr*), 619–23 (*zamān*), 1211–15 (*qidam*), 1327 (*mudda*, *imtidād*), 1449–50 (*waqt*).

preexistence and postexistence. The philosophers had explained time; the mystics set out to conquer it.⁴⁸

It may be helpful for the analysis that follows to separate the classical from the medieval period of Persian mysticism with the death of Muḥammad Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111). Sufi ideas of time in the classical period will be illustrated, first, by a case study of select mystics, and second, by an examination of crucial terms employed by the mystics for their conceptions of time. Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī (d. 234/848 or 261/875), a descendant of a Zoroastrian family converted to Islam, was the first to employ ecstatic utterances consistently as expressions of Sufi experience. The most frequently cited examples are *Subḥānī! Mā a'ẓama ša'nī* ("Glory be to Me! How great is My majesty!") and *anā huwa* ("I am He").⁴⁹ Unlike the babbling of one possessed or blasphemy intended to scandalize others, Bāyazīd's utterances are in fact vividly phrased expressions of the experience of temporal consciousness merging with the eternal. Bāyazīd compares himself to God, claims the praise of angels in God's stead, turns the direction of prayer from God to himself, and declares that the Ka'ba walks around him.⁵⁰ He becomes God's rival, finding God's throne empty and ascending it in recognition of his own true being: "I am I and thus am 'I'."⁵¹ Bāyazīd claims to be without beginning or end, and without morning or evening.⁵² With his claim, "I am I; there is no God but I; so worship me!"⁵³ the monotheist Bāyazīd has reached a consciousness so thoroughly infused with the eternal that there is room neither for the human self nor for God but only for the ultimate and absolute "I," called God as the object of faith but "I" as the subject of mystical experience. Time and eternity have coalesced in the human psyche and the temporal has merged with the eternal in ecstatic consciousness.

Bāyazīd's sense of ecstatic time may be likened to an hourglass

⁴⁸ For a general description of "orthodox" and "heterodox" (Šī'ī) views on the beginning of creation and the world to come, see F. Meier, "The Ultimate Origin and the Hereafter in Islam," in *Islam and its Cultural Divergence*, ed. G. L. Tikku (Urbana, 1971), pp. 96–112.

⁴⁹ G. Böwering, "Baṣṭāmī (Baṣṭāmī), Bāyazīd," *Elr* IV, pp. 183–86; H. Ritter, "Die Aussprüche des Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī," in *Westöstliche Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Meier (Wiesbaden, 1954), pp. 231–43; H. Ritter, "Abū Yazīd al-Baṣṭāmī," *El* (new edition), I, pp. 162–63.

⁵⁰ Abū'l Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Alī Sahlajī, *Kitāb an-nūr min kalimāt Abī Tayfur*, in *Satahat aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, ed. 'A. R. Badawī (Cairo, 1949), pp. 88, 108; Abū'l-Faraḡ 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. 'Alī Ibn al-Gawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (Cairo, n.d.), p. 332; Farīd ad-dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (4 vols., London and Leiden, 1905–1907), I, p. 161.

⁵¹ Sahlajī, *Kitāb an-nūr*, p. 128.

⁵² Ibn al-Gawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, p. 332; Sahlajī, *Kitāb an-nūr*, p. 70.

⁵³ Sahlajī, *Kitāb an-nūr*, p. 122.

whose two conical chambers, time and eternity, connect at the narrow neck of the ecstatic "I." Sahl b. 'Abdallah Tustarī (d. 283/896), living in another corner of Persia, envisioned time as an arch anchored in eternity at its origin and end, yet reaching its apex in the mystic's memory and mind. Tustarī's sense of time can be visualized as a boomerang traveling to the target and returning to the point of its release.⁵⁴ Passing from the picture to the paradigm, one might say that God is envisioned by Tustarī as both the transcendent mystery and the immanent secret of man's existence. Though inaccessible in absolute mystery, God manifests Himself in two fundamental events antecedent and subsequent to the temporal existence of man, the Day of Covenant (*yawm al-mīlād*) and the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*). In the act of recollection, *dhikr*,⁵⁵ which Tustarī was the first to put on a firm theoretical basis,⁵⁶ the mystic reactualizes his pre-existential past and anticipates his post-existential future, drawing the two antipodal events into his temporal existence and realizing the direct and certain presence of the Eternal within his inmost being. Through existential Koran interpretation Tustarī understands the act of *dhikr* from the "Day of alast"⁵⁷ as an act of anamnesis. God reveals Himself as the Lord of the primordial covenant in the inmost recesses of the human soul (*sirr an-nafs*) while the mystic recollects the Koranic phrase, *alastu bi-rabbikum* ("Am I not your Lord?," 7:172). In this covenant, the preexisting souls of all humanity had acceded to the lordship of God before the beginning of time. Through anamnesis the mystic rediscovers this moment of his beginnings before creation in Pharaoh's blasphemous proclamation of his own lordship, *anā rabbukum al-a'lā* ("I am your Lord Most High," 79:24). Listening to God, the true speaker of the Koranic word, the mystic ironically perceives the actual essence of belief flowing from Pharaoh's tongue of unbelief and remembers in his experience the moment when God, in preexistence, affirmed His lordship for human consciousness: there is only One who can truly say "I."⁵⁸ As the mystic speaks these very words of the Eternal, either uttering them perceptibly on the tongue or recollecting them imperceptibly in the heart, his memory returns to his origin before time, his primal moment with God. The eternal beginning of his being, drawn out of his distant past on the Day of

⁵⁴ G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam* (Berlin, 1980); G. Böwering, "The Islamic Case," in *The Other Side of God*, ed. P. Berger (New York, 1981), pp. 131–53; L. Massignon, "Sahl al-Tustarī," *El* (reprint 1987), VII, p. 63.

⁵⁵ L. Gardet, "Dhikr," *El* (new edition), II, pp. 223–27; G. Böwering, "Dhikr," *Elr*, VII, pp. 229–33.

⁵⁶ Böwering, *Mystical Vision*, pp. 45–49, 201–207.

⁵⁷ R. Gramlich, "Der Urvertrag in der Koranauslegung (zu Sure 7, 172–173)," *Der Islam*, 60 (1983), pp. 205–30.

⁵⁸ Böwering, *Mystical Vision*, pp. 185–201.

Covenant, is captured, here and now, in the light of certitude (*yaqīn*) with which he beholds his future and ultimate destiny, the vision of God's face, and the sounds of God's voice on the Day of Resurrection.⁵⁹ For Tustarī time is memory of the eternal past and certitude of the eternal future drawn into the present moment.

While Bāyazīd touched eternity in the "I" of his ecstasy and Tustarī drew eternity from infinity into the moment of memory, Abū Bakr Šiblī (d. 334/945) used the paradox of the mystical moment, the "now" (*waqt*, "time, instant"), to express lasting timelessness experienced in temporality. Šiblī adopted Ḡunayd's (d. 298/910) basic principle of trust in God,⁶⁰ "that you are before God as you were before you were while God is before you as He always is,"⁶¹ and approved the equation of "I am You and You are I (*anā anta wa-anta anā*)."⁶² In mystical experience, his own "I" could not coexist with the divine "I," for "if I were with Him, I would be 'I' (*fa-innānī anā*); but I have passed away in Him."⁶³ "It has been my life-long desire to be alone with God, without Šiblī's being there at this being alone."⁶⁴ Šiblī overcame the dichotomy of God's claim on every moment and the mystic's self-awareness in time through the paradoxes of the everlasting moment and the ocean without shore. He coined the verse, "My moment lasts forever in You; it is everlasting (*musarmad*). You made me pass away from You, and so I was made bare (*muḡarrad*),"⁶⁵ and the two paradoxes, "My moment is without two ends, and my ocean is without shore (*waqtī laysa lahu ʔaraḡān wa-baḡrī bi-lā šāʔī*)."⁶⁶ Expressing his conviction that the present is real only through the past and future that exist compressed into it, he produced the aphorism "a thousand past years in a thousand coming years, that is the moment. Let the phantoms (*ašbāḡ*) not deceive you!"⁶⁷ Beyond the moment, everything past or future is phantom; what the moment holds, it alone is like cash in hand.⁶⁸ "I am on my way to the 'without-beyond,' but I see only 'beyond' (*amurru ilā mā lā waʔā'a fa-lā arā illā*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 207–16.

⁶⁰ Abū Bakr Muḡammad b. Iṣḡāq Kalābāḡī, *Kitāb at-ta'arruf li-maḡhab ahl at-taṣawwuf*, ed. A. J. Arberry (Cairo, 1934), p. 72; tr. A. J. Arberry, *The Doctrine of the Sūfīs* (repr. Cambridge, 1977), p. 92.

⁶¹ Abū Naṣr 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī Sarraḡ, *Al-luma' fi at-taṣawwuf*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London and Leiden, 1914), p. 52; tr. R. Gramlich, *Schlaglichter über das Sufitum* (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 99. ⁶² Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 360; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 498.

⁶³ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 395; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 493.

⁶⁴ 'Aṭṭār, *Tadkirat*, II, p. 165.

⁶⁵ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 365; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 502.

⁶⁶ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 365; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 502.

⁶⁷ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, pp. 404–405; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 546.

⁶⁸ 'Aṭṭār, *Tadkirat*, II, p. 179.

waʔā'). I go right and left to the 'without-beyond,' but I see only 'beyond.' Then I return and, behold, everything is in a hair of my little finger."⁶⁹ Other accounts have Šiblī exclaim, "I am the moment!" "My moment is glorious" and "Nothing but I is in the moment!"⁷⁰ "I am the point under the *bā'*," i.e., the diacritical mark under the Arabic "b," the first letter of the Koran.⁷¹ Since God demands each moment for Himself in His divine jealousy,⁷² Šiblī prays, "O God, if you notice that there is any room left in me for someone else than You, then burn me in Your fire!"⁷³ For Šiblī, then, the paradox of time holds the past and future in the moment, capturing eternity as if in a fleeting instant that cannot cease.

A subjective view of time was also reflected in the mystical speculation on *tawḥīd*, the oneness of God, the eternal and true reality, the One without partners, beside whom the mystic's temporal existence has no claim to reality and his self no right to selfhood.⁷⁴ Realizing *tawḥīd*, the mystic has to abandon any trace of temporal consciousness so that his self is blotted out in actual nonexistence and the Eternal alone in truth subsists. In the words of Abū'l-Ḥasan Ḳaraḡānī (d. 425/1033), "One is a Sufi who is not. The Sufi is a day that has no need of sun, a night that needs neither moon nor star, and a nonexistence that needs no existence."⁷⁵ This nonexistence equals the state of primordial existence at the "Day of *alast*" prior to creation when, at the moment of his standing (*waḡfa*) in the presence of God, man received his own intellect by virtue of his first act of consciousness. Throughout his life the Sufi has the task of dying to his temporal existence and returning to his only true existence (i.e., his nonexistence), being "as he was, when he was before he was" (Ḍu'n-Nūn Miṣrī, d. 245/860)⁷⁶ or "returning to the beginning" (Ḡunayd, d. 298/910).⁷⁷ The fundamental experience of passing away from temporal existence and subsisting in eternal existence was

⁶⁹ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 402; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 544.

⁷⁰ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, pp. 405; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 546.

⁷¹ Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Ḳarīm b. Hawāzin Quṣayrī, *ar-Risāla al-Quṣayriyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḡmūd and Maḡmūd b. aṣ-Šarīf (Cairo, 1385/1966), p. 345; tr. R. Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben al-Quṣayrīs über das Sufitum* (Wiesbaden, 1989), p. 218; see review by G. Böwering, *Orientalia*, 58 (1989), pp. 569–72.

⁷² Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 228; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 346; Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 515; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 355; 'Aṭṭār, *Tadkirat*, II, p. 179.

⁷³ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 405; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 547.

⁷⁴ G. Böwering, 'Baḡā' wa Fanā', *Elr*, III, pp. 722–24.

⁷⁵ Nūr ad-dīn 'Abd ar-Raḡmān b. Aḡmad ḡāmi, *Naḡḡāt al-uns min ḡadarāt al-quḡds*, ed. M. Taḡḡīdīpur (Tehran, 1336), p. 298; G. Böwering, 'Baḡā' wa Fanā', *Elr*, III, pp. 722. ⁷⁶ Kalābāḡī, *Ta'arruf*, p. 105.

⁷⁷ Ḳwāja 'Abdullāh Hirawī Anṣārī, *Ṭabaḡāt aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Kabul 1340/1961), p. 168.

couched in the language of *fanā'* and *baqā'* by Abū Sa'īd Karrāz (d. 286/899).⁷⁸ He saw the transition from temporal to eternal existence not as a total annihilation, since the self is not reduced to pure nothingness, but as a purification of the self, which is drawn to higher forms of being and ultimately absorbed in God – in Abū'l-Ḥusayn Nūrī's (d. 295/908) words "fashioned in the attributes of God" (*ar-taḥalluq bi-aḥlāq Allāh*).⁷⁹ In this passing away one's own self is stripped off, like a snake shedding its skin, and self-identity is obliterated. As the mystic loses the identity with his own self, he experiences identity with God, as exclaimed by Abū Sa'īd b. Abī'l-Kayr (d. 440/1049), "When you see me you see Him, and when you see Him you see me."⁸⁰

When it came to theory, the Persian mystics of the classical period used a variety of terms for their spiritual conceptions of time, prominent among them *waqt*, often used interchangeably with *hāl*, "state,"⁸¹ and *ān*, "here and now."⁸² Abū Sulaymān Dārānī (d. 215/831) was one of the earliest Sufis to define *waqt* in mystical terms as "the preservation of one's state (*ri'āyat-i hāl*)."⁸³ 'Alī b. Muḥammad Dīnawarī (d. 330/941–42) compared these states to bolts of lightning (*al-aḥwāl ka'l-burūq*).⁸⁴ The mystics understood *waqt* as the present moment, "that which dominates the mystic" and "that time (*zamān*) in which he is."⁸⁵ Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī (d. 320/932) described it as an experience lasting less than an hour that comes unexpectedly, brings its own experience of blessings and hardships, and neutralizes experiences preceding it. "The moment (*waqt*) is less than an hour. Whatever blessing or hardship attained you before that moment, you are unencumbered by it. However, you do not know whether or not what occurs in that moment or after it will be within your reach."⁸⁶ *Waqt* is a liberating moment that makes the mystic independent of the past and the future and so collected (*muḡtami'*) that he has no

memory of the past and no thought of what has not yet come.⁸⁷ With a particularly striking image the Sufis likened *waqt* to the sharp edge of a sword.⁸⁸ "The moment is a cutting sword (*saif qāṭi'*)"⁸⁹ cutting the mystic to the quick and separating the "two non-existents" of whatever was before and after. In Ḡunayd's image the moment is the breath "between two breaths," the one before and after, that cannot be overtaken again once it is gone.⁹⁰ The same is expressed by Karrāz's statement that *waqt* is the precious moment "between the past and the future."⁹¹ For Abū 'Alī Daqqāq (d. 405/1015) *waqt* was "a file (*mibrad*) that abrades but does not erase you."⁹² In a phrase of 'Abdallāh b. Kubayq Antākī (d. 200/815–16), the Sufi was a person standing "under the decree of the moment" (*bi-ḥukm al-waqt*).⁹³ *Waqt* also provided the shortest definition of a Sufi, "son of his moment" (*ibn waqtihi*).⁹⁴ In Anṣārī's (d. 481/1089) view, *waqt* compressed one's whole lifetime into the present moment, which alone, in being captured, gave the mystic a hold on past and future: "in reality extended time is the moment" (*az ri'y-i ḥaqīqat zamān waqt ast*).⁹⁵ The moment dominates the mystic with violent, irresistible force – its attribute is *qahr*, compelling force –⁹⁶ because the divine action overpowers the mystic, independently of his own volition.⁹⁷ In Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr Hallāḡ's (d. 309/922) words, "It is a breeze of joy blown by pain" and "a pearl-bearing shell, sealed at the bottom of the ocean of a human heart."⁹⁸ In Massignon's interpretation it is both a moment of anguish and a divine touch of hope that transfigures human memory. It can survive like a germ of immortality buried at the bottom of the heart as a hidden persistence oriented toward the

⁷⁸ Böwering, "Baqā' wa Fanā'?" *Elr* III, pp. 722–24.

⁷⁹ 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat*, II, pp. 54–55.

⁸⁰ Muḥammad b. Munawwar, *Asrār ut-tawḥīd*, ed. D. Šafā (Tehran, 1332/1953), p. 259; G. Böwering, "Abū Sa'īd b. Abī'l-Kayr," *Elr* I, pp. 377–80.

⁸¹ R. Gramlich, *Die schittischen Derwischorden Persiens. Zweiter Teil: Glaube und Lehre* (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 352.

⁸² For a lengthy discussion of this term, see A. R. Arasteh, *Growth to Selfhood* (London, 1980), pp. 107–33.

⁸³ Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Uṭmān Ḥuḡwīrī Ḡullābī, *Kašf al-maḡḡūb*, ed. V. Žukowsky (repr. Tehran 1399/1979), p. 139; tr. R. A. Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism* (repr. London, 1976), p. 112.

⁸⁴ Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 142; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 86.

⁸⁵ Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 188; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 107.

⁸⁶ Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn Sulamī, *Tabaqāt as-sūfiyya*, ed. J. Pedersen (Leiden, 1960), p. 306; ed. Nūr ad-dīn Surayba (Cairo, 1389/1969), p. 304.

⁸⁷ Ḡullābī, *Kašf*, p. 480; Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb*, p. 368.

⁸⁸ Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 189; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 108.

⁸⁹ Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 189; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 108; Ḡullābī, *Kašf*, p. 482; Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb*, p. 369; see also G. Böwering, "The Ādāb Literature of Classical Sufism: Anṣārī's Code of Conduct," in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, ed. B. D. Metcalf (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 84–85.

⁹⁰ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 342; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 479.

⁹¹ Ḡullābī, *Kašf*, p. 480; Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb*, p. 368.

⁹² Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 190; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 108.

⁹³ Sarraḡ, *Luma'*, p. 61; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 112; Kalābāḡī, *Ta'arruf*, p. 69; Arberry, *Doctrine*, p. 89.

⁹⁴ Böwering, "The Ādāb Literature," in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, pp. 84–85; Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, p. 188; Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 107. The phrase appears to have been coined by Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ga'far Sīrīwānī; see Anṣārī, *Tabaqāt*, p. 484; Ḡāmi, *Nafahāt*, p. 272; B. Reinert, *Die Lehre vom tawakkul in der klassischen Sufik* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 191–92.

⁹⁵ Böwering, "The Ādāb Literature," in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, pp. 84–85.

⁹⁶ Ḡullābī, *Kašf*, p. 482; Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb*, p. 482.

⁹⁷ Ḡullābī, *Kašf*, p. 480; Nicholson, *The Kashf al-maḡḡūb*, p. 480.

⁹⁸ Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," in *Man and Time*, p. 113.

future, to "the final stopping of the pendulum of our vital pulse."⁹⁹ Anṣārī defines *waqt* as the moment containing only God, which can be of three kinds. It can come like a bolt of lightning (*barq*), stay for a long while (*bāyandah*) or be overpowering (*gālib*). The moment coming like lightning springs from meditation (*fikrat*); it purifies and makes one forget this world. The moment that perdures is the result of recollection (*dikr*); it focuses the person and makes him forget the world to come. The one that overpowers originates in auditions and visions (*sama' wa-nazar*); it wipes out all traces of human awareness so that only God remains.¹⁰⁰ Later, Ibn al-'Arabī called the most perfect human being the pole (*qutb*) and mirror of God (*mir'āt al-haqq*), "the possessor of the moment (*sāhib al-waqt*), the eye of time (*'ayn az-zamān*), and the mystery of destiny (*sirr al-qadar*)."¹⁰¹

The character of both a sudden impact of grace and an instant of anguish, endowed with emotions ranging from consolation (*bast*) to desolation (*qabḍ*), marked the analysis of ecstasy, a condition for which the mystics used the term *waḡd*, which has two connotations, *waḡada*, "to find," and *waḡida*, "to suffer." *Waḡd* is an inner event; it comes according to Gunayd as "an unexpected occurrence (*muṣādaḡa*)."¹⁰² Nūrī describes it as "a flame flaring up in the hearts (*asrār*) and rising out of longing so that the limbs are stirred to joy or grief at that visitation."¹⁰³ Ecstasy is an act of finding something that has been lost, a moment between a loss (*faqd*) that preceded it and a loss that followed it. In theory it is divided into two acts, *waḡd*, ecstasy that is as yet longing, and *wuḡūd*, finding in ecstasy what one longed for (while *tawāḡud* is the mere affectation of yearning). In a picture, *tawāḡud* is looking at the ocean, *waḡūd* being immersed in it.¹⁰⁴

In medieval Persia, three lesser-known Persian mystics, all active before Ibn 'Arabī's impact on Persian mysticism, may be singled out for their original conceptions of time. The brilliant mystical philosopher and Sufi martyr 'Ayn al-Qudāt (d. 526/1131) of Hamadān,¹⁰⁵ the home of our honorand, was a highly original thinker known for the excellence of his language, and admired or reproached for his daring thought. His conception of time can be viewed against the background of the Persian dualism of light and darkness which he neither rejects nor avows. "The Divinity is two: one is Yazdān, Light, the

other Ahriman, Darkness. Light is that which commands the Good, Darkness that which commands Evil. Light is the primordial Time of Day, Darkness the Final Time of Night. Unbelief results from one, belief from the other."¹⁰⁶ Transcending the dualism of light and darkness, 'Ayn al-Qudāt transposed the dichotomy into God and combined it with the figures of Muḥammad and Iblīs. "When the point of divine Magnitude expanded from the one divine Essence to the horizons of pre-eternity and post-eternity, it did not stop anywhere. So it was in the world of the Essence that the range of the attributes unfolded, namely, divine beauty, homolog of Muḥammad, and divine majesty, homolog of Iblīs."¹⁰⁷ Adopting the opaque notion of the black light (*nūr-i siyāh*) that lies beyond the divine throne, 'Ayn al-Qudāt fused the dualist trends of his thought into a paradoxical unity. The black light is both "the shadow of Muḥammad" whose nature is pure luminosity and "the light of Iblīs" conventionally called "darkness" only because of its sharp contrast to God's light.¹⁰⁸ Taken from a quatrain of Bustī, qualified as "well-known and difficult" by Nūr ad-dīn Ḡāmī (d. 898/1492),¹⁰⁹ the image of the black light is "higher than the point of no (*lā*)" beyond which "there is neither this nor that."¹¹⁰ As if in a nutshell, 'Ayn al-Qudāt expressed the paradox of time and eternity by the black light, the unthinkable conjunction of opposites.

The work of Šams ad-dīn Daylamī (d. c. 593/1197),¹¹¹ a contemporary of Šayḡ al-īṣrāq Yahyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), escaped scholarly notice except for Ḡāmī, who calls him "a great master and scholar whose teachings on the true reality of time, as set forth in his writings, are rarely found in the works of others."¹¹² His ideas on time are not only recorded in the *Ġāyat al-imkān fī ma'rīfat az-zamān wa'l-makān*,¹¹³ a work of his disciple Maḥmūd Uṣnūhī who paraphrases his master's words, but also in his many other works that provide a framework of thought in which he anchors the world of his visions. The visionary world of the mystic is seen as totally real and fully

⁹⁹ Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," in *Man and Time*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁰ S. De Laugier de Beaurecueil, *Khawāḍja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī* (Beirut, 1965), pp. 192–95.

¹⁰¹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Furūḡāt*, II, p. 573.

¹⁰² Sarrāḡ, *Luma'*, p. 301; Gramlich, *Schlaglichter*, p. 431.

¹⁰³ Kalābādī, *Ta'arruf*, p. 82; Arberry, *Doctrine*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁴ Quṣayrī, *Risāla*, pp. 201–206; Gramlich, *Sendeschreiben*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁵ G. Bowering, "Ayn-al-Qoṣāt Hamadānī," *EI*, III, pp. 140–43.

¹⁰⁶ 'Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī, *Moṣannafāt-i 'Ayn al-Qudāt: Tamhīdāt*, ed. 'A. 'Usayrān (Tehran, 1341/1962), p. 305.

¹⁰⁷ Hamadānī, *Tamhīdāt*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ Hamadānī, *Tamhīdāt*, pp. 118, 248.

¹⁰⁹ Ḡāmī, *Nafahāt*, p. 413.

¹¹⁰ Hamadānī, *Tamhīdāt*, pp. 119, 248; Ritter, *Meer*, p. 541.

¹¹¹ G. Bowering, "Daylamī, Šams ud-dīn," *EI*, VII, pp. 341–42; "The Writings of Shams al-Dīn al-Daylamī," *Islamic Studies*, 26 (1985), pp. 231–36. A. J. Arberry,

"The Works of Shams al-Dīn al-Daylamī," *BEOAS* 29 (1966), pp. 49–56.

¹¹² Ḡāmī, *Nafahāt*, p. 355.

¹¹³ For the attribution of this work see G. Bowering, "Ayn-al-Qoṣāt Hamadānī," *EI*, III, p. 141; the work was edited as *Ġāyat al-imkān fī dirāyat al-makān* by R. Farmanīš (Tehran, 1339/1960) and reedited by N. M. Hiraṭī, *Maḡmū'ah-i āṭār-i farsī-i Taḡ ud-Dīn-i Uṣnūhī* (Tehran, 1368/1989), pp. 47–82.

identical with the spiritual world of the invisible realm. The twins of the inner world of man and the upper world of the unseen provide a mirror for the bipolarity of divine nature, eternal time and space, and intuitive knowledge and direct vision of the Eternal. In tackling the controversial problem of the time possessed by God, Daylamī defines it as a totally present moment without past and future, since "time" may be defined as the present moment that is both continuous in nature and past plus future compressed into that very presence. Daylamī finds the proof for his view of time in the possibility of the beatific vision of God and in his own visionary ability to reduce long time spans to single moments.

In a recent monograph Fritz Meier has chiseled out of the sources the grandiose image of Bahā'ī Walad (d. 628/1231),¹¹⁴ the father of Mawlānā Ḡalāl ad-dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273). Bahā'ī Walad emerges in his *Ma'ārif*¹¹⁵ as a man who erases the gulf between God's transcendence and immanence and actually integrates, rather than ascetically sublimates, man's temporal reality into the life with God. God is in no direction and in all directions: He is above, below, or on the same plane; far away or intimately close; neither within nor outside the world; here and beyond; neither in things nor in nothingness; nowhere and everywhere; in short, in an "additional dimension" beyond any dimension. God is without locus and beyond description, and yet has a core of divine essence covered by the mantle of attributes through which He performs His acts, extending Himself as far as their effects. Despite the total break in dimension between God and His creation, God is intimately related to the world. His *ma'yyat* ("being-with") accompanies all that is and all that becomes, be it on the intellectual, spiritual, or physical plane. *Ma'yyat* is time matched with eternity, the penetrating nearness of the impenetrable Other. God permeates all things on the level of being, remains present to them through His act of creation, and intertwines with them through His knowledge, will, and perception. The world is made of atoms, the ultimate components of all things, created by God at each moment. As God is present to each of these atoms, each atom is conscious of facing God with its alert countenance (*waḡh*) and turning away its dark back. All things down to their tiniest particle have this mental relationship to God, being aware of Him explicitly (or implicitly, as if

¹¹⁴ F. Meier, *Bahā'ī Walad: Grundzüge seines Lebens und seiner Mystik*, Acta Iranica 27, troisième série: textes et mémoires, vol. 14 (Leiden, 1989); see review, G. Böwering, *JAOS* 111, 4 (1991).

¹¹⁵ Ed. Badī' az-Zamān-i Furūzānfar, I (Tehran, 1333/1955) and II (Tehran, 1338/1959); see also Sulṭān Walad, *Ma'ārif*, ed. N. M. Hirawī (Tehran, 1367/1988).

in stupor or indifference). Reflecting on the atomistic structure of the universe and the divine coexistence with it in continuous conscious symbiosis, Bahā'ī Walad seeks a return to God whose image he mirrors, yet not a reversal to the nothingness from which he was created. This type of total "cosmic" mysticism, based on atomism and the Eternal's coexistence, seeks the "lust" (*maza*) of drawing matter and body into the embrace of eternity.

Adopting this spiritual mode of time and eternity in poetry, the Persian mystics of the medieval period discovered the true self in the depth of one's personality as the divine secret of the eternal I-ness taking the place of the temporal self. Realizing this secret, the Bīsar-nāma of pseudo-ʿAṭṭār exclaims, "I am God, I am God, am God" (*man kudā-yam, man kudā-yam, man kudā*), and Nasīmī's *Dīvān* takes up a theme of Rūmī's *Matnawī*, "I beheld that I am God from top to toe" (*sar tā ba-qadam wuḡūd-i kvud haqq dīdam*).¹¹⁶ Rūmī catches this secret in the image of a ruby permeated by the rays of the sun and transformed as if into sunlight. As long as the ruby is ruby, there are as yet two, ruby and sunlight, but when the penetration of sunlight is complete there is only one brilliance.¹¹⁷ The old "I" (*anā*) has become the "no" (*lā*) that is denied by the new "I": *man man nī-am* ("I am not I"), as Rūmī says.¹¹⁸ Rūmī was also inspired by a *ḥadīth*, often linked with the Prophet's heavenly journey (*mi'rāḡ*), "I have a moment with God (*lī ma'a Allāh waqt*) to which no created being has access, not even Gibrīl, who is pure spirit."¹¹⁹ The angel remained outside the Divine Presence, stopping at the "lote-tree of the boundary" (*sidrat*

¹¹⁶ Ritter, *Meer*, p. 590.

¹¹⁷ Rūmī, Ḡalāl ad-dīn Muḥammad, *Matnawī-yi ma'nawī*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London and Leiden, 1925–40), reprinted by N. Pūrjavādī (Tehran, 1363), III, pp. 129–30 (bk. 5, verses 2025–35).

¹¹⁸ Rūmī, *Matnawī*, I, p. 193 (bk. 1, verses 3124–26).

¹¹⁹ The *ḥadīth* is not cited in the canonical *Ḥadīth* literature and thus absent from Wensinck's *Concordance*, but it is frequently quoted in Sufi literature in the variant and earlier form, "I have a moment with God (*lī ma'a Allāh waqt*) in which no angel drawn near (*malak-i muqarrab*) or prophet sent (*nabī-yi mursal*) rivals me." The earliest references in Persian Sufi literature are found in the commentary on Kalābāqī's *Ta'arruf* by Mustamlī (d. 434/1042), Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad, *Nūr al-murīdīn wa-fadḥat al-mudda'in*, ed. M. Rawšan, (Tehran, 1363), pp. 613, 767, 777, 879, 887, 902, 906, 1329, 1423; then also in Ḡullābī (d. 465/1072–469/1077), *Kaṣf*, p. 480; Nicholson, *The Kaṣf al-mahjūb*, p. 368; Hamadānī (d. 525/1131), *Tamhidāt*, pp. 79, 123, 131, 203, 317. Maybudī (d. 530/1135), Raṣīd ad-dīn Abū'l Fadl Sa'dī, *Kaṣf al-asrār wa 'iddat al-abrār*, ed. M. Ḡ. Šar'at, (10 vols., Tehran, 1363), I, pp. 269, 683; II, p. 328; III, p. 187; VI, p. 460; VII, pp. 172–73; IX, p. 238; X, p. 432. Maybudī also records another significant variant, I, p. 614. If Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) *Mi'rāḡnāma* is authentic, then its quotation of the *ḥadīth* would be the earliest found in *mi'rāḡ* literature; see Abū 'Alī al-Husayn b. 'Abdallāh b. Sīnā, *Mi'rāḡnāma*, ed. N. M. Hirawī (Tehran, 1365), p. 92.

al-muntahā, 53:14) where reason ends, without scorching his veils, while Muḥammad entered into an intimate time with God, the secret discourse of love between lover and Beloved.¹²⁰ Taken out of created time, the Prophet touched God's eternity, foreshadowing the Sufi's own mystical moment with God, as Sanā'ī (d. 526/1131) had exclaimed: "Love is higher than reason and soul – 'I have a moment with God' belongs to the true man."¹²¹ Persian mystical poetry, in particular, interiorized the Koranic history of prophetic types by transforming the Prophet's *mi'rāğ*, his ascent through the heavens to God, into the soul's journey from the world of temporality to the height of mystical union with the Eternal.¹²²

The Persian mystics not only composed beautiful poetry, but also related wondrous legends about the miracles (*karāmāt*) they claimed to have worked. One kind of miracle was their ability to pull large time spans into short moments or draw out time to inconceivably long durations, rolling up time (*tayy az-zamān*) or expanding time (*našr az-zamān*). Awhād ud-dīn Kirmānī (d. 653/1238) had the ability to roll up time when he called to mind his seventy thousand disciples at night one by one. In a dream, Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209) taught Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) ways in which time could be rolled up. Sufis were observed reciting the Koran from beginning to end, with every letter clearly pronounced, while walking a few steps around the Ka'ba in Mecca – a feat of *baṣṭ az-zamān* in 'Umar Suhrawardī's view.¹²³ Next to speed reading of the Koran called *tayy al-ḥurūf*, there were examples of bilocation or uncanny locomotion. Tustarī was seen with the pilgrims at 'Arafāt outside Mecca and leaving his home in Iraq on the same day. Abū'l-Ḥasan Kāraqānī went five times a day from his home to the Lebanon mountains to lead a group of men in prayer. 'Utmān b. Marzūq Quraṣī (d. 564/1169) and his servant made the round trip Cairo–Mecca–

¹²⁰ A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 220; *The Triumphal Sun* (London, 1978), pp. 285–86; *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill, 1985), p. 169. In this century Iqbāl (d. 1938) took up the theme forcefully in his poetry and prose; see G. Böwering, "Iqbal – Poet between India and Europe," *Islam and the Modern Age*, 9 (1978), pp. 57–70.

¹²¹ Abū'l-Mağd Mağdūd b. 'Ādam Sanā'ī, *Hadiqat al-ḥaqīqat wa sharī'at al-tariqat*, ed. Mudarris Raḍawī (Tehran, 1329/1950), p. 328.

¹²² G. Böwering, "Mi'rāğ," *ER*, vol. IX, pp. 552–56.

¹²³ R. Gramlich, "Zur Ausdehnung der Zeit und Verwandelung," in *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. U. Haarmann and P. Bachmann (Beirut, 1979), pp. 180–92; Ṭağ ad-dīn Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī Subkī, *Tabaqāt as-Sāfiyya al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad at-Taṇāḥī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Hulwī (Cairo, 1383/1964), p. 340, uses the terminology *tayy az-zamān* and *našr az-zamān*, while Gāmī uses the nomenclature *qabḍ az-zamān* and *baṣṭ az-zamān*; see Gāmī, *Nafahāt*, pp. 563–64.

Medina–Jerusalem–Cairo in a single night. One night, Rūmī left Konya in secret to be with a dervish in the Ka'ba and, before dawn, showed Meccan sand on his feet as proof for his wife. At Baghdad, Ma'rūf Karkī (d. 200/815) explained a scar on his face by a fall at the well Zamzam in Mecca during the night.¹²⁴ Another story has it that one of them took off his clothes and plunged into the river Tigris, but came up in the Nile. He walked ashore, started a family, and attended to his business for seven years. One day, while bathing in the Nile, he stuck his head under water, found it pop up in the Tigris, picked up his clothes, and went about his work. Some Sufis hid their faces in their robes and found themselves transported to distant places in no time. Others traveled in a split second from India to Arabia, taking one step from east to west, or had mountain peaks and river banks move toward each other, allowing them to step across. Last but not least, Muḥammad Širbīnī (d. 927/1520) had children in Morocco, Iran, India, and Sub-Saharan Africa, and, in a single hour, looked after all of them so that everybody thought he was always with them.¹²⁵ Bāyazīd cautioned, however, that "even Satan moves from east to west in the twinkling of an eye."¹²⁶ The mystics used these stories of contracting or expanding time and space along with other tales about flying through the air, walking on water, or predicting the future (*firāsa*) as pedagogical devices. They did not interpret them in a flat-footed, literal way. Instead they perceived them to be fitting metaphorical expressions of their own capacity to pass beyond time into eternity.

The Persian mystics also incorporated their sense of time into their religious practices and hagiographies. In writing their religious history they used a variety of approaches. They recorded their history by creating accounts of spiritual itineraries rather than relating chronicles of events. They wrote *tağkira*, memoirs of their encounters with God, and diaries of their inner *ḡihād* to that goal. With the emergence of the Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*) and the social organization of Sufism, the Persian mystics achieved an increasing awareness of their history as a spiritual quest beginning with the origins of Islam. They saw themselves in a genealogical chain (*silsila*) of spiritual ancestors connecting them, frequently through Ḡunayd, with a tradition traced back to Muḥammad's Companions as represented by 'Alī or Abū Bakr. By adopting the idea of *walāya* as the very principle of Sufism

¹²⁴ R. Gramlich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes* (Wiesbaden, 1987), pp. 287–91.

¹²⁵ Gramlich, "Zur Ausdehnung," in *Die islamische Welt*, pp. 188–92.

¹²⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Mawāqī' an-nuḡūm wa-matālī' aḥillat al-asrār wa'l-ūlūm* (Cairo 1325/1907), p. 134.

itself, according to Ġullābī (d. 465/1072–469/1077), they expressed their awareness of being chosen as God's friends (*awliyā' Allāh*).¹²⁷ Soon this idea became associated with the belief in an invisible hierarchy of saints continuing the cycle of prophethood (*nubuwwa*) that had come to an end with Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets (*ḥatm al-anbiyā'*). On the strength of divine inspiration, rather than revealed scripture and divine law, they continued the eon of the prophets with a new cycle, that of *walāya*. This new cycle reaches out into the future when the Seal of the Saints (*ḥatm al-awliyā'*) will appear, either physically concealed here and now or, in Sufi circles favoring STI ideas, apocalyptically expected as the leader (*mahdī*) of the end-times.

The journey through the world of time in Persian mysticism lead from Bāyazīd's ecstasy, Tustarī's recollection of primordial time, Šiblī's paradox of the eternal moment, and Karrāz's annihilation of temporality and subsistence in eternity through theoretical notions of *waqt* and *wajd* and such select medieval expressions of time as 'Ayn al-Qudāt's black light, Daylamī's past and future compressed into the present, and Bahā-i Walad's co-being of the Eternal to time expressed in the images of poetry, miracle stories, and social institutions. It may be appropriate to conclude with that ritual in which the Persian Sufis gave physical expression to their perception of time and ecstasy: the practice of *samā'* (literally, "audition"). The Mawlawī order in particular drew music and dance into this liturgical practice.¹²⁸ The harmony between the leader (*šaykh*), the dancers, and the musicians and the repeated movement of the dance in a number of rounds (*dawra*), synchronizing the movements of the group as a whole and integrating the steps of each individual, capture in the dance the choreographed expression of ecstasy. The dance gave Persian mysticism its "body language" of time. It may not be far-fetched, therefore, to espy in Mawlawī *samā'* a rhythm of time and history become ritual in the whirling around the still-point of one's heart where time and eternity are blended in silent music.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ H. Landolt, "Walāyah," *ER*, XV, pp. 316–23.

¹²⁸ H. Ritter, "Der Reigen der 'Tanzenden Derwische,'" *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, 1 (1933), pp. 28–40.

¹²⁹ A similar version of this chapter was published in *Iran*, 30 (1992), pp. 77–89.

5 · Persian miniatures: illustrations or paintings

OLEG GRABAR

Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton

Some thirty years ago, Professor Ehsan Yarshater wrote two short articles on the aesthetics of Persian art.¹ His starting point was poetry, as seemed reasonable at the time and remains reasonable now because so much more thought has been given over the centuries to the aesthetic judgment of poetry than of painting and even of music, which, Professor Yarshater suggested, could be considered with the same criteria in mind. What is remarkable about these articles, which read a bit nostalgically nowadays, is that, in their concern for an interpretation based on Iranian sources and on Iranian practices, they have not been followed up, with a few recent exceptions.² To be sure, much has been written about painting in the Iranian or Iranic world, and to some of it I shall return presently, but, if anyone, especially a

¹ "Some Common Characteristics of Persian Poetry and Art," *Studia Islamica*, 16 (1962) and "Persian Poetry and Painting: Common Features," in A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art*, 15 (London, 1967). Both essays deal with the same sources and elaborate essentially the same ideas.

This chapter is the second version of a series of considerations on Persian painting which were elaborated at one time and whose first version is "Toward an Aesthetic of Persian Painting," published in a volume of essays, *The Art of Interpreting*, edited by Susan C. Scott (*Papers in Art History*, IX [University Park, Pa., 1995]). This second version varies from the first in some of its emphases and uses different explanatory models, especially toward the end, but, for the most part, sticks to the same argument. Another difference between the two is the illustrations. There are fewer in this version, but two are in color and can, therefore, show an important dimension of Persian art.

² The two most striking recent exceptions known to me are Johann Christoph Bürgel, *The Feather of Simargh* (New York, 1988) and A. Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Khawaje Mirak Naqqash," *Journal Asiatique*, 276 (1988). Thinking in this direction was suggested some twenty years ago by Priscilla Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Paintings," in R. Ettinghausen, ed., *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum* (New York, 1972); Lisa Golombek, "Toward a classification of Islamic Paintings," in the same collection; and Chahriyar Adle, "Recherches sur le module et le tracé correcteur dans la miniature orientale," *Le Monde Iranien et l'Islam*, 3 (1975).

newcomer to the field of Persian painting, asks for a reflective and thoughtful broad introduction to a visibly unique tradition of painting, Professor Yarshater's articles of a generation ago still stand almost alone, while the study of the History of Art and Iranian studies have changed immensely.

This chapter tries to enter again into the realm opened up by Professor Yarshater, to raise again questions about how one should (or could) see and interpret the images in Persian books. Such an attempt may be premature, because the study of books, illustrated or not, is being revolutionized by new techniques of investigation and by the gathering of data often forgotten or left aside in the past.³ But it may also be useful to recall that, just as there is much to be said about the physical side of making books, of writing in them, and of decorating them, there are several components, or approaches, probably complementary rather than antagonistic, to the aesthetics of Persian painting, to the ways in which we actually see and appreciate or should see and appreciate the miniatures of so many manuscripts. One can imagine an approach borrowed from one of several comparable traditions like medieval Christian art, post-Renaissance Western painting, or Chinese art. With these examples, both history (contemporaneity of creativity and, therefore, possible commonality of expression, undoubtable occasional transfers of motifs or of techniques of visual expression) and judgment (the fact that, for better or for worse, all viewers of our own time have been formed by the knowledge of Western art) justify the assumption of a possible common canon of appreciation. Another approach is to search the social, religious, aesthetic, and spiritual realms of Islamic culture for theories or principles, rejections or invitations, for attitudes toward painting that would explain what is characteristic of and therefore different about that painting.

Both of these approaches can easily be developed, and to some degree both have been followed in the considerable literature on

³ I refer primarily to all the activities surrounding what is now known as codicology, the study of the book as an object rather than as the carrier of a text. Except for the systematic analyses of early Koran manuscripts initiated by François Deroche, *Bibliothèque Nationale, Les Manuscrits du Coran* (Paris, 1983 and 1985), and the rather striking example of the Freer Jami as explained by M. S. Simpson, "The Production and Patronage of the *Half Aurang* by Jami in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Ars Orientalis*, 13 (1982), the most immediately accessible compendium on codicology applied to manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, or Turkish is François Deroche, ed., *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient* (Istanbul and Paris, 1989), with contributions by nearly all the practitioners of codicology and paleography in Muslim languages in the world and with many references to specific examples. For a general introduction, see Jacques Lemaire, *Introduction à la codicologie* (Louvain, 1989).

Persian painting which has emerged over the past half-century.⁴ But they may be more fruitfully and more sensibly used if they are preceded by another type of exercise: the direct analysis of Persian painting or of individual examples of that painting with as limited and as controlled an interference from other factors as possible. The implication of this exercise is, first of all, that there is an autonomous language of the visual arts which can be experienced by any sensitive eye and mind, and then, that such understanding and appreciation as may come about will lead to more directed and more thoughtful questions from the social, philosophical, or cultural context of painting or from the responses and procedures developed for western European and Chinese painting. Although he would probably not put it that way, now or then, Professor Yarshater's essays of thirty years ago were, I believe, directed toward the identification of that autonomy in painting, as the very structure of poetry or of music allows for an independent definition of the two arts within a universal context. One way of doing so for painting is the subject of this chapter.

Nearly every student or layman with a modicum of visual culture keeps in his or her memory a picture of Persian painting (see Plate 1): colorful images, almost always miniatures in books, with many figures in fancy clothing fighting, feasting, frolicking, or hunting; flowers and shrubs perennially in bloom, even at night; two-dimensional men, women, and animals cavorting in a setting of spacious meadows or gardens with a brook somewhere in a corner (Plates 2-3) and contorted rocks at the edges or else in, under, or around a theatrical, flattened architecture of arches and vaulted halls with elaborate walls. A few exceptions notwithstanding, it is a world without shades in which men and women without emotions enact events whose purpose or drama, if there was one, appears sublimated into repetitive poses and canonical masks (see Plate 4).

A general appreciation of this sort is valid for the core centuries of an idiosyncratic Persian art of painting, a period which began in the last decades of the fourteenth century and which ended – or at least diminished in intensity and in quality – two hundred and fifty years later, in the seventeenth century, when a different type of individualized single paintings came to dominate. Persian painting also existed before 1370, but most of its examples lack the stylistic originality of

⁴ For the period up to 1982, an almost complete bibliography is found in Nasrin Rohani, *A Bibliography of Persian Miniature Painting* (Aga Khan Program, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1982), and a reasonable survey by Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims is found in R. W. Ferrier, ed., *The Arts of Persia* (New Haven, 1989).

what has properly been called the 'classical' tradition of Persian painting.⁵ From the sixteenth century onward a Persianate painting also dominated the arts of the Ottomans in Istanbul and, in a far more spectacular and original fashion, the creativity of the Mughals in India and of several lesser centers in the Indian subcontinent. I shall not deal with these later works, partly because of my ignorance of their intricacies, but partly also because even a cursory look at Ottoman, Mughal, or other Indian miniatures and paintings reveals a host of features which identify a different visual language from the Persian one, even if a family resemblance is generally obvious.⁶

The two centuries with which I shall deal created, honed, and perfected a mode of expression significant enough in its effectiveness and/or in its meaning to serve as a model for the Ottoman Mediterranean and for the Indian peninsula, and was occasionally picked up by painters as early as Rembrandt and as recent as Matisse.⁷ Within this long period over a vast land, many changes occurred, and several more or less identifiable local or social variants can be detected. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall discuss primarily works from the fifteenth century or from the last decade of the fourteenth. It was the century known as the Timurid century, when, under the aegis of Mongol rulers, several spectacular centers of artistic production and architectural growth were developed in a wide area extending roughly from Baghdad and present-day Iraq to Kashgar or Kashi, the westernmost city of present-day Uighur China just a couple of hundred miles east of Samarkand. The centers themselves

⁵ Ferrier, *Arts of Persia*, pp. 200–41. The best older survey, partly outdated because of so many new discoveries, but still wonderfully clear, is Ernst Kühnel, "History of Miniature Painting," in Arthur U. Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 1829–97. The term "classical" has been used by Ernst Grube in the title of an exhibition catalogue, *The Classical Style of Islamic Painting* (Lugano, 1968). Basil Robinson has used "metropolitan" to deal with roughly the same grouping of works, although with different implications, in *Persian Miniature Painting from Collections in the British Isles* (London, 1967).

⁶ The best introductions to Ottoman painting and to Islamic painting in India are: Esin Atil, "The Art of the Book," in Esin Atil, ed., *Turkish Art* (Washington, D.C., 1980), pp. 137–236; S. Cary Welch, *The Art of Mughal India* (New York, 1963) and *India, Art and Culture 1300–1900* (New York, 1985); and Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting* (London, 1983).

⁷ For Rembrandt, the key study is still Friedrich Sarre, "Rembrandts Zeichnungen nach indisch-islamischen Miniaturen," *Jahrbuch d. königl. Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 25 (1904), pp. 143–58. See also Richard Ettinghausen, "The Decorative Arts and Painting," in Joseph Schacht and C. Edmund Bosworth, eds., *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1974), esp. pp. 311–12, translated in Hendrik Budde, ed., *Europa und der Orient, 800–1900* (Berlin, 1989), where there are many comparable examples, esp. on pp. 741–57. For Matisse, see Pierre Schneider, *Matisse* (Paris, 1984), *passim*, and see index under "Orient."

were generally the great cities of the Iranian plateau and of the central Asian trade roads, like Shiraz, Yazd, Sabzevar, Tabriz, Meshed, Samarkand, and especially Herat. But buildings of major importance were also built in smaller places hallowed by holy men or proximate to the estates of rich patrons. Yasi, modern Turkestan in Kazakhstan, where the shrine of Shaykh Ahmad Yasavi still stands, is an example of the first type, and Khargird in northeastern Iran near the present Afghan frontier is typical of the second. The patrons of these centers were, with notable exceptions, the Mongol descendants of Timur himself or else Mongol or Turkic feudal lords who had adopted Islam and a high Iranian culture as their mode of entry into legitimate power over ancient lands.⁸

Iran in the fifteenth century was remarkable for many things other than art. It bears a striking resemblance to fifteenth-century Italy, Poland, Muscovy, Burgundy, and India, but it is also comparable to the better-studied western European lands in that so many of its institutions as well as patterns of thought, paradigms of knowledge, and creative myths and memories were fundamental to nearly all later Muslim dynasties and rulers except in the Arab world. Within the stunning creativity of that century in the lands of Iran and Turan, I shall deal with painting only, and with mainstream painting at that, but it must be recalled that there existed at that time, somewhere

⁸ The architecture and, by extension, patronage of this period have been recently studied in two books of fundamental importance: Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khorasan* (Costa Mesa, 1987), and Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton, 1988). Much has also been recently written (or is being completed) on the history and culture of the Timurid people. For preliminary investigations involving the arts, see Thomas Lentz and Glen Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Washington and Los Angeles, 1989), and the texts gathered by Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Century of Princes* (Aga Khan Program, Harvard University, and MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 1989). A series of articles from a symposium held in Toronto in 1990 has been edited by Lisa Golombek and Maria E. Subtelny under the title *Timurid Art and Culture* (Leiden, 1992). Particularly notable in their concern for the evaluation of patronage are various other works by Maria E. Subtelny, including "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 479–505.

In the last sentence of this paragraph I am adopting an argument developed at great length by Thomas Lentz in his "Painting at Herat under Baysunghar ibn Shahrukh," Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1985. It seems to me a reasonable explanation, but it assumes a solution to a complex problem raised by several listeners to the various versions of the lecture which preceded this paper at the conference. The problem is that of the intended and/or expected viewers of the illustrated manuscripts of the time. Did the princely patrons look at those images? Or do we simply have a system of peer competition between courtly librarians? To answer these questions, a more thorough study of the documents available is needed than I have been able to accomplish. See, however, the conclusion of this chapter.

within the wider Iranian sphere, an art of painting attributed much later by Ottoman librarians to a fictional Black Pen. These paintings, preserved almost entirely in a group of albums in Istanbul, exhibit a voluminous ferocity and a powerfully distorted realism which are at odds with the main tradition.⁹ At this stage, there is no consensus on the origins or the audience of these paintings. The painting mode with which I shall deal is the dominant one, the one which is most originally Persian and the one which demonstrably appears in the last quarter of the fourteenth century.¹⁰ It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that it corresponded to some clear feature of Timurid taste and that whatever it accomplished remained meaningful to several generations of patrons, makers, and users from the wide Iranian world.

My initial statement about this main tradition defined the image we have of Persian painting in visually formal ways, in terms of colors, patterns of composition, and range of recognition of otherwise known features like men, women, flowers, or else of actions like hunting or playing a musical instrument. This is possible to do for images whose meanings we do not know and whose stories are not available to most of us because of a function of perception which, in a recent book, I called "optimistic."¹¹ What I meant by this neologism is the ability to recognize a large number of represented items in generic terms, without being aware, or even needing to be aware, of their culturally directed references. One can recognize twelve life-size standing men with or without beards at the entrance of a cathedral without knowing that they are Apostles and the carriers of Christ's message. A swastika can be seen without having a Nazi association and only Byzantinists see emperors whenever something is purple, while the redness of the enemy is no longer an operative slogan in our own society.

⁹ Much has been written about these paintings, including works based on some of the most exemplary research in the field; but they are still a mystery for the most part. The easiest access to the scholarship is through *Islamic Art*, I (1981), devoted entirely to paintings from the albums, while the most accessible color pictures are in M. S. Ispiroglu, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols* (New York, 1966).

¹⁰ The traditional date for the new mode is 1370, for a manuscript of the *Shahname* now in Istanbul (Hazine 1511, dated 1370) – see Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva, 1961), p. 63 – exhibits for the first time a large number of conventions which became part of the language of the new painting. Whether one should describe this collection of means of expression (high horizon line, monochrome gold or blue sky, small tufts of grass, flat figures, and so on) as a language – a consistent set of interchangeable units of composition – or as a mode – a pattern of expression which transforms the elements it uses into a coherent and meaningful whole – requires yet another kind of investigation.

¹¹ Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 162, 172–74, 236.

To recognize something optisemically may well be sufficient and fulfilling. There is a wonderfully pleasing fantasy world in the images of Persian painting, and we could all simply be satisfied with it, engage the images as inspirational exercises for our own fantasy, and perpetuate a poetic language which is different from the one we would employ for Michelangelo or Manet, but which always implies a creative contact between a consistent set of images and a personal or cultural aesthetic or emotional sensitivity. This kind of discourse will always remain, and I should like to call it *libertarian*. For it is an attitude toward the arts in which each person is relatively free to find his or her own interpretation, his or her own pleasure. In popular terms this attitude is identified with a statement like "I know what I like." The expression usually has a defensive side to it, as it implies garrulous ignorance on the part of whoever uses it, but it probably corresponds to the kind of judgment most of us make most of the time about most things. We constantly express opinions or act out satisfaction about everything from people to food without really knowing what they are about.

Libertarian attitudes are generally saved by the poetic language of those who express them, and while, to my knowledge, no writer on Persian painting has matched the quintessentially libertarian and hardly open-minded positions of Ruskin or of the Goncourt brothers, a libertarian streak permeates much of the literature on that painting, especially from the English-speaking world.

A second type of discourse about and thus of attitude toward Persian painting can be called *taxonomic*, as its primary objective is to organize a large mass of data into coherent and cohesive groups. Such groups have traditionally been called "schools," because of a classical art-historical model: there is a master, a teacher-creator-innovator-employer, who radiates techniques of designing and of painting to students; the latter then continue these techniques, transfer them to new places, modify them, pass them on to others, and otherwise contribute to the relatively autonomous (that is to say, relatively free from social, political, and other nonartistic contingencies) evolution of an art of painting, or, for that matter, of any other technique. Within the framework of a taxonomic purpose and as a result of the methodological assumptions it makes, a given image is decomposed into a bundle of begetting influences and hopes for a place in the philological paradise of stemmata, that is to say, of items, in this case miniatures or possibly motifs like landscapes or figures, related to each other by the arrows of an organigram or a flow chart.

It is easy to parody and to be impatient with this approach to

Persian (or any other kind of) painting, but its appropriateness is strengthened by written sources from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which provide information about the lives of painters and calligraphers. In nearly all cases these sources identify artists through the masters from whom they learned and through their "workshops," almost always at or near the court of a prince. It is, therefore, reasonable to consider as valid the grouping of existing paintings into two stages: the master-pupil relationship and the relationship between the artists and the courts.¹²

Taxonomy – the ordering of the hundreds of existing manuscripts, single pages, and fragments of all sorts into groups arranged according to space, time, and if possible attribution to individual painters – is the domain in which the study of Persian painting has made its most significant strides over the past three or four decades. Arguments will obviously remain on many specific items, but a basic structure exists for the straightforward labeling of Persian miniatures and for a sense of an evolution, of a process of change, which would have led from a dramatic imagery enacting epic battles and hunts or recording historical narratives so typical of the fourteenth century to the lyricism of early Timurid painting and eventually to the individualism of a more naturalistic style in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Quite naturally provincial and qualitative branches derived from the main line of this evolution and the whole taxonomic construct does resemble a tree-like body visible, among other places, in a catalogue put together by one of the leading taxonomists of the century. More subtle but still initially taxonomic arguments have explored how individual painters, identified or anonymous, have woven their awareness of past traditions and their own idiosyncrasies (or, at times, those of their patrons) into unique or differentiated visual statements.¹³

¹² The most important of these texts is Dost Muhammad's introduction to the Bahram Mirza album in Istanbul. Parts of that text are available in Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Painting* (London, Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 183–86, for example. The most complete translation is by Thackston, *A Century of Princes*, pp. 335–60. Other texts are found scattered throughout the literature. Particularly important examples for the chronology of painting are: Qadi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, tr. Vladimir Minorsky (Washington, 1959) and Sadiqi Bek in Martin Dickson and Stuart Welch, *Houghton Shah-nameh*, pp. 254–69. An easily available collection of such texts is much to be desired.

¹³ The two most prolific and most successful taxonomists of Persian painting are Ivan Stehoukine and Basil W. Robinson. Their numerous books and articles can easily be found in the bibliographies and surveys listed above. The schematic chart of the evolution of Persian painting is found in Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting*, p. 32. More complex analyses, although also involving primarily taxonomic procedures and expectations like attributions and genealogies of paintings, are found in

There is, of course, nothing wrong in this way of looking at Persian painting, and at one time or another and possibly with varying degrees of success, all students of Persian painting have engaged in it. Something may be lost in poetic expression, but the loss is more than made up for by accuracy and precision in analytical description and by the provision of correct information which brings joy to writers of museum labels and of captions under illustrations in books: date, place, attribution, provenance. The viewer of an exhibition or the reader of a book can look at the book's plates or at the pictures hanging on the wall and be a libertarian to his or her heart's content in the security of appropriate identification tags for the object of his or her study.

It is difficult to argue against taxonomies of any sort, but there are two lines of argument which suggest that this approach to Persian painting, without being wrong or incorrect, misses something essential about it, just as the libertarian approach may have read into that painting all sorts of features which were not there to begin with and whose presence is perhaps too closely tied to the peculiarities of the individual viewer.¹⁴

One line of argument is that an approach based on attribution to artists and on a hierarchy of classification transforms the work of art, Persian or not, into a commodity with a pedigree, a label of authentication, and a price. Such transformations may well be justified by the collecting instinct of today, just as they existed at various moments of any artistic history, and certainly in medieval and early modern western Asia.¹⁵ The morality of this approach may be questioned by some, but the more important point is that, only too often,

the numerous works by S. Cary Welch, especially the monumental publication of the Houghton *Shahname*, and in an equally sophisticated essay by A. Sourén Melikian-Chirvani in *Journal Asiatique*, 276 (1988), pp. 97–146, among several recent examples by younger scholars.

¹⁴ I am, of course, aware of the position developed by M. Bakhtin and his followers that any object always contains the sum of the views expressed about it and, therefore, that it is impossible in any discourse to avoid or suppress libertarian pronouncements already made. The field of criticism of Persian painting is much too new to deal with these subtleties, but it is to the credit of Welch's analyses that some of the paintings of Shah Tahmāsp's reign are marked by his eloquent words about them. His examples are precisely the beginning of a critical discourse about the arts which has not been picked up by scholarship after the publication of Welch's and Dickson's *chef d'œuvre*.

¹⁵ There is as yet no history of collecting in the Muslim world. For a few examples within a much broader context, see Joseph Alsop, *The Rarer Traditions of Art* (New York, 1981), pp. 253–55. For partial and preliminary suggestions, see the essays by several authors in Esin Atıl, ed., *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait* (New York, 1990).

it reduces the painting almost exclusively to its statistical and pecuniary role alone.

The second line of argument stating the limitations of a taxonomic approach is of a very different kind. It takes issue with the very action of removing, virtually if not actually (although there are too many examples of the latter),¹⁶ images from their setting. To treat Persian miniatures like Rembrandt drawings or like paintings by western European or even Chinese masters, that is, like independent works of art which can be discussed from the walls of museums, is, at the outset, intellectually slightly fraudulent, for it is to study something quite different from what it really is. A libertarian point of view makes it possible, if not always legitimate, to look at paintings separately from the books of which they are a part, since the user's or the viewer's view is the dominant one. But it is absurd to do so even if one's aim is only a taxonomic one, for the label or labels provided by taxonomy are not an explanation or an interpretation of an image: they merely become one of its attributes. In other words, it is legitimate and possibly necessary to seek other approaches to the understanding of Persian painting, ways which stand somewhere between the anarchic freedom of individual opinions and the nonnegotiable rigor of factual definitions and clear-cut decisions about authorship.

One could, of course, identify a third approach to Persian painting and call it *contextual*. A context can be something more than or different from what is usually assumed, for instance, by codicologists who limit their concerns to the physical pages of a book, to the writing on it, and to all the activities and processes which went into the making of it. Nor is it necessary to leap to social, economic, and cultural problems of the time, as the more progressive contemporary contextualism would expect one to do. One reason why I shall not take either of these contextual approaches is that information on both is sorely lacking and, since I did not engage myself in the systematic investigation of sources, I, like most scholars, am limited by the paucity both of available data and of secondary literature. All I can do is to propose direc-

¹⁶ The desecration of manuscripts or albums through the removal of miniatures from them has gone on for centuries but became particularly destructive in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early ones of the twentieth. The shameful break-up of the Houghton *Shahname* barely ten years ago shows that financial rewards at times still decide the fate of works of art. In reality, of course, the issue is not merely one of pitting virtuous scholars and lovers of art against dealers and investors in art, since some of the latter are also lovers of art. The issue is that of preserving, as far as possible, the integrity and authenticity of individual works of art (which means keeping miniatures in the books for which they were made) versus the accessibility of these same works of art, often hidden in shamefully unavailable private collections.

tions for work and hypotheses for confirmation, modification, or rejection. But, before considering contextual issues of any kind, it may be worthwhile to look again at the paintings themselves as experienced by viewers and to understand them as arbitrary combinations, simply or artfully composed, of details. Any contextual definition of images requires the initial "weighing in" and evaluation of these details, the establishment of a hierarchy among them, and the relationship between these details and the narrative purpose assumed for illustrations of and in a book. To identify and analyze details is not a new procedure,¹⁷ but the potential of such analyses has been brilliantly demonstrated in a very recent book by Daniel Arasse.¹⁸ I shall not engage in the discussion of a book which is a work of criticism rather than of history, but I do wish to acknowledge my debt to it for establishing detail as something much greater than and certainly different from the Morellian automatic gesture in painting and for making me realize and understand something in Persian painting which I felt without being able to identify it. I shall try to show what it is through the examples of one early manuscript and of a few later miniatures.

My first example is a celebrated *Diwan* or collection of poems: the three poetic stories by Khwaju Kirmani, who died in 1352. The manuscript is in the British Library (add. 18113) and dated to 1396. The text was copied by Mir Ali Tabrizi, the greatest calligrapher of his time, and the paintings executed by Junayd, one of the artists mentioned in the Iranian histories of painting and calligraphy. It is probably because all the information needed to make a label is present in the manuscript itself that its nine miniatures, often published, had never been studied in their entirety.¹⁹

¹⁷ The difficulty is that the procedure has not been followed systematically in dealing with Persian painting except by S. C. Welch and by Lentz, "Painting at Herat." But, even in these two instances, the necessary details are not available as illustrations or drawings.

¹⁸ Daniel Arasse, *Le Détail, pour une histoire rapprochée de la peinture* (Paris, 1992).

¹⁹ Teresa Fitzherbert, "Khwaju Kirmani (689-753/1290-1352): An Eminence Grise of Fourteenth Century Persian Painting," *Iran*, 29 (1991), pp. 137-51. A very suggestive analysis of the narrative of the text has been provided by J. C. Bürgel, "Humay and Humayun, A Medieval Persian Romance," in *Proceedings, First European Conference of Iranian Studies* (Rome, 1990). The identification of the scribe with the celebrated inventor of the *nasta'liq* script is doubted by Basil Gray, "History of Miniature Painting," in Basil Gray, ed., *The Book in Central Asia, 14th-16th Centuries* (Paris, UNESCO, 1979), p. 116, but he gives no reason for his doubts. See, however, Priscilla Soucek, "The Art of Calligraphy," p. 24 of the same volume. The Khwaju Kirmani manuscript is mentioned in every survey of Persian painting with a most complete description in Ivan Stchoukine, *Les Peintures des manuscrits timourides* (Paris, 1954), pp. 33-35. But even the latter misidentifies the subject-matter of folio 11.

I shall deal only with the five miniatures which illustrate the first of the stories, the romance involving many sad events but with a happy ending of the prince Humay and the princess Humayun. In describing them, I shall try to provide a definition of each miniature through categories of expression as a whole and in terms of representation of details. In order to follow the sequence of the book, I shall mention them in order of their appearance.

The first miniature (Plate 5) shows a garden enclosed by a wall and fronted with a brook; the crescent moon and two birds are all that exist outside, and night and day are represented simultaneously. In the garden with its beautiful trees and flowers Humay on the left and Azar, a young woman, meet because they were looking for Azar's companion and Humay's friend Behzad, who is dead drunk under a tree. They see each other while looking at the young man, and one of the points of this image is an evocation of one of the constant themes of Persian poetry, drunkenness as the equivalent of love and love as well as drinking, together or separately, as metaphors and means for the mystical love of and eventually union with the divine. In this miniature, the illustration of a narrative predominates, as is clear from the size of the protagonists, and such esoteric meanings as can be proposed derive from a knowledge of the story and of the conventions of Iranian thought of that time, in other words from the two more traditional forms of context, the book and social culture.

The second miniature is much more problematic (Plate 1). It is an interior enthronement scene and consists of a combination of two kinds of elements. One consists of inanimate items: architectural fixtures like walls, doors, windows, tentures (tenters), and tiled floors, and colorful decoration of, for the most part, geometry and some writing; movable objects like tables, pillows, books, ewers. All but one of these objects are immediately clear and recognizable. The exception is what appears to be a skin filled with air or with some liquid located right at the bottom of the vertical axis of the painting. The other elements are people: most of them are young males standing in groups of two or four and distinguishable by their headgear; five musicians are squatting to the right, while two figures at the door to the left are depicted in a relatively relaxed manner. Three fully depicted individuals are different. One is seated on a high throne, wears a crown, and leans toward the second one, seated to his left but below the throne. The latter has one hand to his heart and the other extended downwards. The third is kneeling below the enthroned figure and appears to be offering, rather dramatically, something to the seated figure. These three figures form a closed triangle within the

picture, as though oblivious of all the others but serving as the focus of their attention. The representation is bound in its back by a wall with only two openings. There is a door at the bottom left which is partly open and in the upper part of the center a window opens toward the outside and two female faces, the only ones in the miniature, peer down at the events below. These two openings are connected with the trio in the center of the image, as two lines starting with the face of the seated figure on the right and connected to the other two heads lead directly to the open window and to the door.

It is the first of these lines which identifies the subject of the illustration: Humay, seated in the presence of the emperor of China, sees and is seen by Humayun, the emperor's daughter, as they fall in love. But it is difficult to argue that this is the obvious topic for the making of an image, as was the case with the first miniature of the manuscript. In terms of subject-matter, one *could* argue that the subject is a royal feast for which the visual meeting of the two heroes was but an excuse, as though in a book there had to be a connection with the story told. One could also argue that the meeting was meant to be submerged by a feast (or by some other motif), because the experience of the picture does not lie in recognizing an event, but in being pleased by an image. The nature of this pleasure and especially the ways in which it affects viewers may still elude us, but it is possible to seek these ways in the unexpected details like the pose of the seated man at the door or the dancing steps of the falconer farther to the right, the nearly effaced Persian inscription on the left wall, or even the peculiar animal-skin bag in front. The "reading" of this miniature would then consist in discovering unusual details which had become traps set by the arts, the patron, or the expected public in order to attract attention, to recall something specific in contemporary life, to show off a maker's talent, perhaps to make the distinction forcefully defined by Matisse as between the "portrait" of something and the "sign" of something.²⁰

The third and fourth illustrations are frequently reproduced because of the richness of their gray-green-and-yellow tonality in which nature, buildings, and people have melted into physical sameness. But there is more to them than their brilliant colors. One image shows Humay arriving at the castle of Humayun (Plate 2), and the proportions between figures and setting make it reasonable to identify the subject first. But what we really see is a walled and locked tower-like building with a young woman on the top floor located on

²⁰ Quotation and pungent comments in Arasse, *Le Détail*, p. 20.

an island floating in thin air. From somewhere else a young crowned rider has come to its gate and points to it. For the real contact is between the rider and the building, as nothing in his or her gaze leads to the other figure. In fact it is only a rather disquieting flock of birds that is allowed to move in and out of the walled area, but it never comes near the human protagonists. Another feature of this miniature is the striking contrast between monochrome exteriors and multi-colored interiors or between blooming trees inside and mangy vegetation outside. Even the water is carefully channeled inside the palace, while it is more naturally meandering on the outside. Except for the birds, no one moves in this image. Nothing is happening, has happened, or will happen. It is all a dream, a fantasy, and that fantasy without event, without story, has been expressed with a stunning visual clarity in which every part, every brick or tile, every bit of inscription has been defined with the utmost precision. Unless a more careful examination discovers some unusual detail in this miniature, I prefer to interpret it as a patterning of details to the point of eliminating their potential for meaning. As a result, the structure, in color and composition, of the image becomes its strongest expression.

The other image in the same pattern of color shows Humay engaging in battle with Humayun (who had disguised herself as a man) and discovering her gender (Plate 3). Much must be known before the subject can be understood, although Humayun's gesture of removing her helmet *in order* to be seen is clearly depicted, as is required by the story. But, even if here it is a very minor detail that is the excuse for the miniature, this detail does not explain the composition of the picture and its unusual setting, nor are the two horses simple to avoid. That "something else" which explains the painting may well be the overall domination of all reality by the one power and presence of the divine symbolized by a single pattern of color or else the demonstration that things are not what they seem to be and that Humayun, in spite of appearances, is not a man. As will be suggested shortly, another and more general explanatory theory may also be proposed.

The last two images from this manuscript also share domination by a single color, this time red and red-associated colors, and they too are remarkable for the differences between them in spite of the colorfulness of tone. Humay and Humayun are enthroned and celebrating their union (Plate 4). They are seated together on a high throne and all around them lavishly dressed men and women are going through the ritual gestures of a feast: conversations in small groups, side plays with flowers above the main scene, eating, drinking, music making. It is an image of orderly, organized, possibly slightly

boring formality in an ideal world. But is it right to see the miniature as such a coherent construction? What is remarkable about its details – and especially the representation of young women to the left – is the liveliness of their gestures within the constrictions of the style. Heads and hands move about, and the same rhythms are transferred, in a more subdued fashion, to the men on the right. Only the row of musicians in the lower right seem straight and mechanical. It is perhaps in this variety of details rather than in the coloristic sameness that the true expression of this miniature lies.

At first glance, the last image recalls the first one but is more crowded. Its subject is simple, as it shows Humay leaving the bridal chamber after the consummation of his marriage to Humayun. The blood-stained sheet is displayed in front of the coy bride seated on a mat. Gold coins are being showered on the groom and picked up by attendants. There is a wild male dancer prancing to the music of an orchestra of women players. Cakes are eaten and festive lights are spread everywhere, as the blood pot is being viewed and even, apparently, touched like a relic. An unusual, quilt-like rug is spread and the architectural details are unusually rich, including a tall commemorative urn (or possibly a vase) fitted into a muqarnas vaulted niche. In a way details here have gone wild and all sense of order seems to have been lost. Or is it that we do not read the details appropriately yet?

The kind of analysis I have proposed for these six miniatures can easily be extended to many very different examples from other times. For instance, one could take a miniature from the celebrated *Bustan* of Sa'di kept in the Cairo public library and illustrated by Behzad, the most renowned of all Persian painters, in 1488.²¹ Its representation of a building (Plate 6) in a festival of studied details: architecture with portico, *iwān*, minbar, mihrab, and fountain for ablutions, then a mosque; decoration with tiles of many colors typical of Timurid architecture; a collection of figures engaged in all of a mosque's activities from washing their feet to praying. The precision and immediate recognition of all of these details compels the viewer to concentrate on the three people in front and to the right who are neither praying nor engaged in actions expected in a public sanctuary. All three of

²¹ Neither the manuscript nor the painter have received the attention they deserve. On Behzad, the most complete information is still that gathered by Richard Ettinghausen in "Behzad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al., 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1960–). The Cairo manuscript is mentioned in all surveys. Full description by Stchoukine, *Les Peintures des manuscrits timurides*, pp. 74–76. For more recent appreciations, see Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, pp. 285–99.

them have visual peculiarities which distinguish them from other figures: a tall man at the door with a big stick, an older man dressed in rags holding a bowl or a cup, someone in the window in the lower right corner with his face buried in his clothes, as though he is trying to hide his expression. It is these three people who form the narrative illustrated by the miniature: in a fashionable upper-class mosque, a doorman refuses entry to a poorly dressed beggar, while some obnoxious character laughs at the scene.²² It is the nature and quality of the nonnarrative details which compel the identification of the narrative ones, in a scene which reminds the viewer of a book after having led him or her to escape into a painting.

For my last example, I shall simply mention a series of beautiful, if puzzling, paintings signed by or attributed to Mir Sayyid Ali and datable to around 1540. Two of these are assumed to have belonged to a great Nizami manuscript (Plate 7), and one may have come from a manuscript of Hafez (Plate 8).²³ The key peculiarity of the experience one has of these paintings is that no narrative subject-matter is apparent in them. No one has as yet succeeded in proposing a plausible textual inspiration for them, even though the general theme of a city, a camp, or a school occurs in many stories in Iranian literature. What does emerge can be called a festival of details, in which dozens of roughly related vignettes cover practically the entire surface of the page. They can be as small as a single cat or the strange outline of a black figure just below the laundry hanging in the lower part of the miniature. Or they can be a large ensemble at a tent or a scene of a boy being punished at school. It is possible, even likely, that other contextual approaches may discover some subtle hierarchy in these assemblages and so provide some explanation of why they were made. In the meantime, a contemporary viewer can simply enjoy a museum of details, for, as Arasse has so artfully suggested, the detail is the place of encounter, the meeting place, of two demonstrations: the competence, even art, of the painter and the potential for recognition

²² It is an illustration of Sa'di, *Bustan*, tr. G. M. Wickens, *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 106–108.

²³ The first two, which came from the Cartier collection, are presently in the Harvard Art Museums; M. S. Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting in the Fogg Art Museum* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), pp. 58–61 with bibliography; S. C. Welch, *Wonders of the Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). The third one belongs to the Vever collection, now at the Sackler Museum in Washington; Glenn D. Lowry, *A Jeweler's Eye* (Washington, D.C., 1988), pp. 182–83 and Glenn D. Lowry and Milo C. Beach, *An Annotated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, D.C., 1988), pp. 340–42. I still have, as I had when I first saw these paintings, some uncertainty about their initial function, but these archaeological and iconographic issues are not pertinent to my remarks in this chapter.

of truth or resemblance in the art of painting.²⁴ At this level, however, these miniatures, if indeed they were that initially, have broken free of the book and its narrative. Illustrations have truly become paintings.

What I have tried to show through these examples of specific manuscripts can be summarized as follows. During the fifteenth century there developed an art of painting whose aim was not to illustrate texts but to decorate books. A small number of pages are selected for miniatures, which are almost always full-page images.²⁵ They are inspired, at times very generally and very approximately, by something in the text, but mostly they are affected by fads, references, needs, and impulses other than those of the book itself.

In order to discover what these sources of inspiration may have been, all that is required is to examine the miniatures themselves, for they provide the answers to our questions in this gigantic game of Jeopardy that contextual history of the arts or of anything else has become. As in any iconographic study so fashionable for the art of these very centuries in western Europe, the aim is to learn to distinguish that which is typical from whatever appears to strike an unexpected, and at times a jarring, note. Such variants may be technically iconographic, but they can also involve formal decisions and unusual combinations of colors or of people. Here are a few randomly chosen examples of clues for possible contexts: the lively and imaginative fantasies of monstrous figures frolicking in nature from a great sixteenth-century manuscript;²⁶ the sudden introduction of a dramatic depiction of the attempted seduction of Joseph by Zulaykha;²⁷ the visionary conception of space implied by a visit of Alexander the Great to an Indian sage;²⁸ the depiction of a construction site with the potential for a highly comic disaster;²⁹ the personalized depiction of a court with portrait-like sages and the bizarre shadow of a devil over the otherwise pedestrian topic of a good king (Sultan Sanjar) meeting an old woman who criticizes his rule;³⁰ acrobatically impossible staging for a royal life beyond the wildest dreams of man;³¹ and, finally, in a festival of colors, the dream of creation in which all is good and beautiful.³²

²⁴ Arasse, *Le Détail*, p. 116.

²⁵ Actually, as has been shown in some detail by Adle, "Recherches," and by many other scholars in a more simple manner, passages of writing are often artfully fitted into miniatures. The full classification of the various patterns involved still requires study. ²⁶ Dickson and Welch, fol. 21v. ²⁷ Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, p. 296.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 250. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 288. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

³¹ Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, pp. 126, 155, 157.

³² Dickson and Welch, color plate 8. This magnificent painting has been frequently reproduced, as in Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, opposite p. 18.

I do not have an explanation for each of these specific and for the most part unique details. Scarcely any of them are explained directly by the text, but I can easily imagine the kind of research into visual vocabulary, textual criticism, and contemporary history which may elucidate many of them, while the rest will enter into the limbo of answers whose questions are lost forever. But, without denying the probable validity of *ad hoc* explanations of individual images, it is also necessary to provide a framework for the visual language that would have made individual answers possible and presumably understandable. This framework can be imagined with the help of aesthetic theories developed precisely in the early part of the fifteenth century around the major courts of Iran. These theories deal primarily with literature and probably with music, and to a lesser degree with architecture.³³ One example, that of a treatise written in 1423 by one Sharaf al-Din Rami,³⁴ has been discussed elsewhere.³⁵

The main point of this chapter lies elsewhere, however. It is to argue two points at the same time. The first is that it is reasonable and possible to set the miniatures from Persian manuscripts on a scale ranging from almost exclusively narrative or illustrative to just about devoid of any reference to a specific text or event. Such decisions are possible through the rating and evaluation of details, sometimes self-contained units within a miniature (a group of three standing figures or a rocky formation), sometimes choices made by the contemporary viewer attracted by a certain pattern of colors or the outline of an animal or of a face. It is too soon to decide whether this passion for details was a way for premodern artists in the Iranian world to express something – for instance, their inability to represent what they saw, while being always praised for doing (or not

doing) so³⁶ – or whether it is the only way in which a viewer today, who is not reacting to the stories unknown to him or her and for whom the culture and history of the time are lost, can explain his or her experience of these images. My second point is that the experience of any art is always a balancing act between the uniqueness of a work, a period, and a place on the one hand and on the other, of a contemporary sensual make-up which is rarely unique. It is only in details – single little vignettes or assemblages of separate parts – that the competence of the maker, the will of the patron, and the taste of the viewer can truly meet and exchange what they have to offer.

³⁶ Many authors, especially Soucek and Golombek, quoted earlier, have discussed the paradox involved in images which do not deal with spatial or physical verisimilitude and texts which almost always do. Within a theory of the detail, the criticism of Behzad, the acknowledged best master in the tradition of Persian painting, that he was poor at representing beards would make sense as an example of criticism concerning a detail, because it is by details that a painter was judged.

³³ For architecture, what was known until c. 1985 is in Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, especially pp. 78ff. See also Renata Holod, "Text, Plan and Building," in M. Sevenko, ed., *Theories and Principles of Design in the Architecture of Islamic Societies* (Aga Khan Program, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1988), pp. 1–12. New and pertinent discoveries of drawings will be published soon by Gülrü Necipoglu. There is, to my knowledge, no systematic study of literary theories of the time. Preliminary discussions by Z. Safa and E. Yarshater are in Peter Jackson, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, VI (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 913–94.

³⁴ Sharaf al-Din Rami, *Anis al-'Ushshaq*, tr. and notes by Clément Huart, *Traité des termes figurés relatifs à la description de la beauté* (Paris, 1875). An important analysis based on Nizami is that by Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Paintings," while many important texts and suggestive comments are found in Bürgel, *The Feather of Simargh*. But none of these studies and resources, which are not easily available anyway, can replace a true book of sources.

³⁵ In the version of this chapter in Scott, *The Art of Interpreting*.

6 · The Persian contribution to Islamic historiography in the pre-Mongol period

C. EDMUND BOSWORTH
University of Manchester

What has already emerged from the preceding chapters is a picture of the richness, and especially the continuity, of Persian history and civilization. One aspect of Persia's roots in the past was highlighted for us only some three decades ago, when the late Shah celebrated – on a date somewhat arbitrarily chosen but nevertheless indicative of the intensity of the feeling for the past in that land – the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy. This continuity of heritage has been more distinctly felt in Persia than in any other Middle or Near Eastern country, for elsewhere, violent breaks in national and religious traditions have been brought about by such events as the Arab Muslim invasions of the Levant or the extinction of Byzantium by the Latins and then the Turks. Attempts earlier in the twentieth century by, e.g., certain Egyptians, to emphasize the continuity of Egyptian life with Pharaonic times, or by Lebanese Maronite writers to recall their land's Phoenician past and an historic orientation westwards, or, in the present day – to descend into the grotesque – by Ṣaddām Ḥusayn to hark back not only to the Arab victory at al-Qādisiyya but also to the Mesopotamia of the Babylonians and Assyrians, with his Hammurabi Division of the Republican Guard, have therefore seemed rather forced and artificial.

Many Persians, on the other hand, are genuinely much more conscious of a past which stretches far back beyond the advent of Islam, however much fundamentalist bigots of the Islamic Revolution may deplore this. There have always remained standing, for all to see and admire, remarkable monuments to the glory of ancient Persia: the remains of Cyrus the Great's capital at Pasargadae, the immense palace complex of Darius and Xerxes at Persepolis or Takht-i Jamshīd, the many Sāsānid rock reliefs in the Zagros Mountains, the Tāq-i Kisrā or palace of the Sāsānids at Ctesiphon near Baghdad, etc. Hence historically minded early Islamic rulers in Persia showed an interest in

these antiquities, despite their nature as remnants of infidelity. The great Būyid Amīr 'Aḥud al-Dawla visited the Achaemenid capital of Persepolis and got a local Zoroastrian *mōbad* to interpret for him the Pahlavi inscriptions there, and had an Arabic inscription of his own carved there to commemorate his presence.¹ Also, the glory of New Persian literature, Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāma* or "Book of Kings," glorifies the ancient, pre-Islamic past of the nation, and the names of the heroes found there – Rustam, Isfandiyār, Tāhmāsp, Kay Kāwūs, Bahman, Iraj, etc. – have been popular as personal names side by side with purely Islamic ones. Firdawsī, despite being a Muslim, felt the threat to the heritage of Persia from the new faith of Islam, the abandonment of the old religion of Zoroaster and the heroic traditions, and the replacement of the indigenous Persian language by Arabic as the favored medium for polite literature or *adab*, theology, law, and science, although he was not able to synthesize from his materials a unified view of his nation's past.² However, he need not have worried about any possible threat to Persia's heritage, for the resilience of the national culture was such that it was able to adapt itself to the new faith and law of Islam, and still survive. Indeed, it was able to influence and modify the course of Islam in the eastern Islamic world very appreciably, so that the integration of Persia's peculiar national genius and distinct identity with the much newer religion of Muḥammad was never entirely complete – but this is another, very long, story.

The aspect of Persian culture which is discussed here is that of history writing in Persia in the Islamic period up to the Mongol invasions, and, in particular, of how Persians of the earlier, formative period viewed themselves as heirs to a great national past and at the same time as participants in God's scheme of salvation for His servants under the light of Islam.

The considerable amount of detail available – from later times, it is true – on the pre-Islamic past of Persia might lead one to think that, for the Persian of pre-Islamic times, his national history was as supremely vivid as it clearly was for his descendant of post-Islamic times, who had available to him an epic poetico-historical tradition of which the *Shāh-nāma* is only one manifestation among many. Yet the Persian dynasties before the Arab invasions do not seem to have cultivated formally the science of historiography. The Persians had incorporated an associated people, the Medes, during the sixth century BC to form the Achaemenid empire. But we know of Cyrus

¹ Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (London, 1962), p. 251.

² See G. E. von Grunebaum, "Firdausi's Concept of History," in his *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London, 1955), pp. 175–77.

the Great's exploits of conquest in Mesopotamia largely from the local historical texts and cylinders of Mesopotamia itself, and it was Darius who shortly afterward proclaimed his own title as a Persian universal ruler, writing in the vernacular Old Persian of his own land as well as in such older-established languages of administration and culture as Babylonian and Elamite: the descendant of an eponymous ancestor Achaemenes, with an authority buttressed by the favor of the land's protective deity Ahura Mazda.

Such inscriptional texts, beginning a tradition of self-expression which the Parthians and Sāsānids were to continue, had a common propagandist motive behind them, the clear aim of impressing contemporaries with the ruler's might; but there does not seem to have been any continuing official tradition for the recording of history involving, e.g., official court annalists. The record books of the laws of the Medes and Persians mentioned in chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel were probably essentially administrative registers, recording official decrees and serving as guides for state functionaries. Hence here, as with almost the whole of pre-Islamic Persian history, the succession of rulers within dynasties, questions of chronology (difficult in the absence of an official era comparable to those used at various times by the Romans, Jews, and Christians), accounts of wars and conquests, and the existence of administrative and fiscal systems have to be constructed largely from external, above all, Babylonian and Greek, sources. Professor Yarshater himself has suggested that Zoroastrian religion, and the world-view that went with it, may have determined the nature of Persian views of history at this time. The fact that the broad outlines of cosmic history had been determined at the outset by the creator Ahura Mazda, involving a human history which was only to have a comparatively short temporal extension, inhibited natural curiosity, the use of the critical faculties, and the desire to collect and arrange facts about human activity. Instead, as is clearly the case by Sāsānid times, history served a social and moral purpose by upholding the ideals of the state and church. It was also didactic and educational in that it demonstrated to the populace at large the power and cohesiveness of the Persian empire under its benevolent rulers and wise Zoroastrian priesthood, stressing the wisdom of earlier sages (what the Muslims were later to call "the pious ancestors," *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥūn*) and the baleful effects on religion and the body politic alike of such deviances as Manichaeism and Mazdakism.³

³ Ehsan Yarshater, "Iranian National History," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III, *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 367–70.

At all events, there emerged by Sāsānid times, at the outset transmitted orally, often in the form of heroic poetry and romances, a remarkably detailed national tradition which may be called a "history" only so long as one bears in mind the above qualifications. This national tradition does provide a framework of succeeding dynasties and rulers, from the Pishdādids onward, but concentrates on the heroic leading figures as embodiments of national glory without any attempt at a chronology of events or at describing the territorial and political evolution of the Persian empire, its component provinces and peoples. Hence these epic legends of, e.g., the first men or the struggle between Iran and Turan offer as little true history as do the Homeric epics or *Beowulf* or the *Nibelungenlied* or the *Chanson de Roland*.

Yet there arose a demand, after the oral stage, for written versions of these national epics, and this literature was recorded in Sāsānid times as the *Khwadāy-nāmag* or "Book of Kings," which gathered together the folk romances, *dastāns*, which had circulated especially in the eastern part of the Persian world, Khurasan, Khwarazm, Transoxania, and Sistan (and also in the northern parts, the Caucasian lands of the Alans, forming there a different tradition), where the popular heroic traditions seem to have been most strong and widespread.⁴ And, of course, it was this "Book of Kings," in various Persian recensions and then Arabic translations (notably that of the early 'Abbāsīd period secretary, originally from Fars, Ibn al-Muqaffa', who died in 139/756 or soon afterwards), which in post-Islamic times was to be the basis for the Arab and then Persian histories⁵ and likewise for the Persian poetical renderings, above all by Firdawsī and Asad-i Tūsī, of what were considered as the heroic deeds of their ancestors. These form the core around which items of information, often of more obviously historical value, from ancillary disciplines – inscriptions, clay tablets, papyri, coins – and the evidence from the Avesta and the Middle Persian Zoroastrian religious and legal texts can be assembled.⁶

The Sāsānid empire was administratively quite a sophisticated one, with a class of secretaries or scribes (*dabīrs*) who ran the state apparatus; the chief secretary at the court of Ardāshīr I (before 224–40) was one of those court officials honored by having sacrifices

⁴ Richard N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East* (London, 1975), pp. 20–22.

⁵ See Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen, 1944), pp. 59–62, on these various histories from Islamic times as sources for Sāsānid history.

⁶ See Yarshater, "Iranian National History," pp. 359–61.

performed in their names at the sacred fires established by Shāpūr I at Naqsh-e Rostam.⁷ A corollary of the importance of this scribal class was the existence of official documents and records. It might have been expected that this would have generated a historiographical tradition proper, but as with the earlier periods of Persian history, this did not happen. The *Kārnāmag-i Ardashīr-i Pāpakān* is a lively account of the founder of the dynasty, linking him with the preceding lines of the Achaemenids and Arsacids,⁸ but it is a historical romance rather than serious history. The information on Ardashīr to be found in the Islamic Persian author Ṭabarī is a more sober and less favorable story of a monarch who appears more as usurper than as hero constructing a mighty Persian empire, and Ṭabarī probably used a historical tradition independent of both the *Kārnāmag* and the *Khwadāy-nāmag*.⁹

All this leads us to conclude that when the Arabs initially conquered Persia in the seventh century AD, and the process which Richard Frye has neatly formulated as the Persian conquest of Islam began, there was no substantial prototype of Persian historiography. On the other hand, the Arabs – although on a lower cultural plane than the Persians – did possess their tribal historical tales, those of the *ayyām al-ʿArab*, glorifying, it is true, the individual tribes and their heroic chiefs but also bringing genuine information on the relations of the tribes of the Yemen and the north and east of the Arabian peninsula with outside powers like the Byzantines, Persians, and Ethiopians and their Arab confederates like the Ghassānids and Lakhmids.¹⁰ Most significant were the firm roots of the new faith of Islam in human history. Muḥammad the Prophet, unlike the hazy figure of Zoroaster, is a fully attested person in history, whose actions as the exemplar for mankind and whose utterances as the channel for divine revelation were pinned down in time, minutely observed and recorded for posterity by the *muḥaddithūn*, or traditionists, and the *akhbārīyyūn*, or relators of historical traditions. Out of the *sīra* of the Prophet and the biographical lists of the various generations, *ṭabaqāt*, of Companions of Muḥammad and of succeeding scholars and religious figures, there emerged a literature which displayed many of the characteristics of a true science of

⁷ Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, p. 210; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, art. "Dabūr. I. In the Pre-Islamic Period" (Ahmad Tafazzoli).

⁸ J. P. de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi Writings," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III, pp. 1187–88. ⁹ Yarshater, "Iranian National History," pp. 476–7.

¹⁰ Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd revised ed. (Leiden, 1968), pp. 18–24; A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, ed. and tr. Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton, 1983), pp. 12ff.

history.¹¹ Not only did the Arabs have a fixed era, something lacking amongst the earlier Persians, but they possessed a teleological explanation for the course of history which meant that the scope of a history initially resting just on the Prophet's career and the subsequent conquests of the Muslims had to be widened into a salvation history embracing previously existing religious traditions and cultures which formed in some measure a *praeparatio evangelica* for Muḥammad. Hence the way was open for the compilation of universal histories, the crowning glory of which in the Arab-Islamic tradition was to be that of Ṭabarī. A further innovation of the Arabs, and one which the pre-Islamic Persians had apparently never used, was their adoption of the annalistic arrangement for the conveyance of historical information, practiced by the Iraqi school of historians such as al-Haytham b. ʿAdī and Muḥammad al-Wāqidī toward the end of the second century AH and opening of the third, i.e., by the early part of the ninth century AD, a mode of expression possibly influenced by the strong Byzantine tradition of annalistic history writing.¹²

With these models, it was not therefore surprising that the first Persian Islamic scholars to write history proper, whether in annalistic form or otherwise, should employ Arabic rather than their own tongue. It was not that the latter was incapable of such a use; already Middle Persian and the evolving New Persian had reached a stage of flexibility and power of expression which would have qualified them perfectly to act as vehicles for such writing. The factors, religious and cultural, which assured the primacy of Arabic as the language of scholarship in Persia for the first three or four centuries and which only slowly allowed Persian to attain an equal status for literary expression (as late as the Timurid period, i.e., the late eighth/fourteenth and the ninth/fifteenth centuries, we find major historical works concerned with the Persian and Central Asian worlds still being composed in the florid Arabic chancery style characteristic of the age, like the history of Tīmūr and his conquests, the *ʿAjāʾib al-maʿdūr fi nawāʾib Tīmūr*, by Ahmad b. Muḥammad Ibn ʿArabshāh, d. 854/1450, ethnically Arab but brought up in the central Asian and Turkish worlds) are well known and do not need rehearsing here. It is sufficient to repeat that, until the fourth/tenth century, virtually all the literature by Persian Muslims which has survived was written in

¹¹ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 76ff.; Duri, *Writing*, 136ff.; cf. Bertold Spuler, "The Evolution of Persian Historiography," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London, 1962), pp. 126–27.

¹² Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 71ff.

Arabic, with notable Persian statesmen and litterateurs striving to place themselves, at times to the point of genealogical attachment, squarely within the Arabic-Islamic tradition. Many of them even tried to attach themselves as *mawālī*, clients, of Arab tribes (as did the indubitably Persian Tāhirids to the Hījāzī tribe of Khuẓā'a, a claim ridiculed by poets hostile to their pretensions like Dī'bil b. 'Alī, a genuine Khuẓā'ī Arab).¹³ Yet when New Persian emerged in the northern and eastern regions of the Persian world, the very ones where attachment to the heroic Persian past and its virtues seems to have persisted most strongly, we gradually find the emergence of historical writing in Persian, starting with the Persian epitome of Ṭabarī's universal history by the Sāmānīd vizier Abū 'Alī Muḥammad Bal'amī, who began his work in 352/963–64, and into which he inserted some additional material not found in the Arabic original, without, however, having the idea of continuing the history up to his own time.¹⁴

The earliest historians of the Arab conquests of Persia do not seem themselves to have been Persians, or if they were ultimately of Persian stock – as has been surmised for Balādhurī, who is said to have been a translator from Persian and whose account of the conquests is the most detailed and authoritative of all – this origin went far back in their genealogies. However, an Arab like Ibn Wāḍī' al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897) was in his earlier years in the service of the Tāhirid governors of Khurasan, and hence knowledgeable about Persian affairs, and their contemporary Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī (d. c. 282/894–95) was undoubtedly a Persian and wrote a history, the *Kitāb al-Akhbār al-ṭīwāl*, "Book of the Long Historical Narratives," which went up to the end of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim's reign (227/842). It is not in annalistic form but in that of a continuous historical narrative, unbroken by *isnāds* or chains of guarantors, thereby giving the history a distinctly literary character. It begins as a general history but then starts to take on the aspect of history written from a specifically Persian standpoint. The epic Persian heroes, religious leaders like Zoroaster and Mazdak, and ruling dynasties like the Sāsānids are treated, and the history of the succeeding Islamic period concentrates quite noticeably on events involving or concerning Persia, e.g., the beginnings of the 'Abbāsīd *da'wa* or revolutionary propaganda campaign and the

career of Abū Muslim, the civil warfare between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn, the rise of Bābak al-Khurramī and the fall of the Afshīn Haydar. Dīnawarī's approach to history was, for his day, quite original; he was concerned with putting forward the Persian viewpoint, and he was apparently able to use Persian sources, including pre-Islamic epic romances, as well as the standard Arabic authorities. Moreover, he was an innovator in that he tried systematically to connect the history of the various pre-Islamic nations and empires and to lay down some form of chronological synchronism between them, a technique which Rosenthal sees as possibly borrowed from Graeco-Syriac Christian historiography, since previous Persian writers who had attempted to establish such a synchronism between the Persian and Seleucid datings had failed.¹⁵

For sheer amount of detail and for the number of parallel versions of events which he gives, the universal history of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī (d. 311/923), the *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa 'l-mulūk* "History of Prophets and Kings," is supremely valuable to the historian of early Islam, and Ṭabarī's stupendous achievement exercised an enduring influence on later generations as a model of how history should be written.¹⁶ Although his standpoint, when he comes to deal with events of the 'Abbāsīd period, is that of a resident of the capital, Baghdad, he was of course of Persian blood, from Ṭabaristān in the Caspian region. He dealt with pre-Islamic world history in the three synchronized compartments of Judeo-biblical history, the history of the Arabs of the *jāhiliyya* and the history of the Persians, from the first man Kayūmarth through the heroes of epic romance to the Sāsānids, a dynasty for whose history Ṭabarī is of outstanding value, in the absence – as we have noted – of any surviving indigenous Persian historiography from that time. The career of the Prophet Muḥammad follows the pattern of the *sīra* or biography already well fixed by his time, but after the hijra (AD 622), the annalistic form is employed, with careful use of historical sources and their *isnāds* and with varying *khabs* or historical reports placed consecutively. For the history of the Arabs in Persia, Ṭabarī relied extensively on the otherwise lost historical works of Madā'inī (d. 215/830 or 225/840), which were especially concerned with the history of Khurasan, Fars, and Sind. We know from titles cited in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm that Madā'inī wrote a special book on the conquest of Khurasan and other monographs on the governorships there of important Arab

¹³ C. E. Bosworth, "The Tāhirids and Arabic Culture," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 14 (1969), pp. 49–50; C. E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 11 (1973), pp. 53–56.

¹⁴ See Elton L. Daniel, "Manuscripts and Editions of Bal'amī's *Tarjama-i Tārikh-i Ṭabarī*," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1990), pp. 282–87.

¹⁵ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 92–93; see also Yarshater, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III, p. 361. ¹⁶ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 134–35.

leaders like Qutayba b. Muslim, Asad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī and Naṣr b. Sayyār. Ṭabarī also used the equally lost work of Abū Mikhnaḥ (d. 157/773), who was an expert on the history of Iraq, presenting in particular the Azdī tribal tradition, but since the supreme governorship of Iraq included at this time responsibility for Khurasan and the East in general, he was valuable to Ṭabarī for events there also.¹⁷ Ṭabarī's faithfulness in rendering transmitted texts went as far as including foreign-language quotations, including some Persian ones, such as Persian verses regarding the Arab expeditions to the upper Oxus lands and other Persian phrases uttered by Muslim Persian leaders on various occasions.¹⁸

For the period after Ṭabarī's death, we have the general history of the Arab traveler, geographer, and historian Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), who in his *Murūj al-dhahab*, *The Golden Meadows*, and his précis of history, the *Kitāb al-Tanbīh*, *Book of Admonition*, treated at considerable length of the early Persian kings among a description of all the foreign rulers known to the Muslims of his time, examining world phenomena and events from a point of view quite distinct from that of the theologically minded Ṭabarī. Mas'ūdī's approach may be described as a universal cultural interpretation of history,¹⁹ and this same tradition was likewise followed almost contemporaneously by the Persian al-Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī. In c. 355/966 Maqdisī composed at Bust in southern Afghanistan, at a time when that town was being ruled by a series of Turkish slave commanders of the Sāmānids, and at the prompting, so he says, of an unnamed vizier of that dynasty, his *Kitāb al-Bad' wa 'l-ta'rikh*, *Book of Beginning and History*. Here the author envisages history as Mas'ūdī does, but from a more philosophical and more critical angle, concentrating in three of the six volumes of his work on a discussion of ancient history from the creation onwards, the cosmic framework of the world, and the philosophical bases of the various religions, before embarking on Islamic history proper. It seems highly unlikely that Maqdisī, a very shadowy figure, could have known Mas'ūdī; it seems rather that he was a representative of the ferment of religious and philosophical ideas which is discernible in the eastern Persian lands, sc. Khurasan,

¹⁷ Rosenthal, *History*, p. 70; Yarshater, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III, p. 360; Franz Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. I. General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood* (Albany, 1989), p. 53.

¹⁸ *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar . . . at-Tabari*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., (15 vols., Leiden, 1879–1901), II, 1602–3, III, 50, 65.

¹⁹ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 135–36; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., ed. Bosworth et al., art. "al-Mas'ūdī" (Ch. Pellat); and, in general, Ahmad Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his World, a Muslim Humanist and his Interest in Non-Muslims* (London, 1979).

Sistan, and Transoxania, during the fourth/tenth century, not least amongst whose strands was that of Ismā'īlism, with its philosophical approach to questions of religion and cosmology.²⁰ In any case, Maqdisī's book proved a dead end in the development of historiography in Persia, and it fell into almost total oblivion.

The mainstream of conventional historiography in Persia, all this time still in the Arabic language, was carried on by such an author as Hamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. after 350/961) in his expressly chronological *Ta'rikh Sinī mulūk al-ard wa 'l-anbiyā'*, *Record of the Chronology of the Kings of the Earth and the Prophets*. As its title implies, it covered both secular and sacred history from the Israelites, through the Greeks, Persians, and ancient Arabs onward, but with the author's Persian ethnic feeling (Ibn al-Qiftī describes him as a strong partisan of the Persian Shu'ūbīs against the Arabs) shown in his placing the Persian kings first and by his completing the last chapter on the rulers of Islam by a special section on the governors of Khurasan. But whatever anti-Arab prejudices he may have had, he was a careful and intelligent writer, aware of all the strands contributing to the rich fabric of Islamic civilization and of the need for carefulness and accuracy in chronological matters.²¹

The successor dynasties in Persia of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate now begin to have their own historians. It would be good if we still possessed the original text of the *Ta'rikh Wulāt Khursāsān*, *History of the Governors of Khurasan*, by the author of the Sāmānīd period Abū 'Alī al-Husayn al-Sallāmī. He was actually in the service of the Muṭtājīd amīrs of Chaghāniyān on the upper Oxus who were also at various times governors of Khurasan, and his fortunes were probably linked with the Chaghānīs. Fortunately, his work, of high value for the history of the eastern fringes of the Islamic world, was utilized by the Ghaznavid historian Gardīzī and by the Mesopotamian general historian Ibn al-Athīr, the last events common to both sources – hence almost certainly taken from Sallāmī – being the deaths from plague in 344/955 of Abū 'Alī Chaghānī and his son.²²

By the second quarter of the fourth/tenth century, western Persia was almost wholly under the rule of indigenous Daylamī or Kurdish dynasties, and it now developed its own tradition of history writing. This was stimulated by the need of new, originally barbarian

²⁰ See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., art. "al-Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī" (Ch. Pellat).

²¹ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 136–37; Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 362.

²² W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1928), pp. 10–11; C. E. Bosworth, "The Rulers of Chaghāniyān in Early Islamic Times", in *Iran, JBIPS*, 19 (1981), p. 3.

dynasties like the Daylamī Būyids to secure for themselves a niche in the broad historical development of Islam and to buttress their authority – in the first place, entirely based on force of arms before they were able to browbeat the Abbasid caliphs, at this time at their lowest ebb of power, into confirming the legitimacy of their rule – in the eyes of the general community of Islam (even though the particular form of Islam which the Būyids favored was, arising out of the nature of the Islamization of the Caspian highlands, Zaydī Shīʿism). One of their instruments for these processes was the literary and historical skills of members of the Šābiʿ family from Ḥarrān in northern Syria, and in particular, the expertise of ʿAḍud al-Dawla's secretary Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Šābiʿ (d. 384/993), who, whilst out of favor and in prison, embarked on what was conceived as an official history of the Būyid dynasty. Only an abridged section of this is extant, but given its necessarily laudatory nature and the apparent close interest in it on the part of the Amīr, this *Kitāb al-Tāj fī akhbār al-dawla al-daylamiyya* can hardly have been an example of dispassionate history writing;²³ it was to be subsequent members of the Šābiʿ family, working under the last Būyids and the early Seljuqs, who were to merit praise as serious and fair-minded chroniclers of their time.²⁴

But it was the milieu of the later Būyids which nurtured one of the greatest of Persian historians, Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), who served the Būyid amīrs as a high financial official but who was also a philosopher and scientist and whose approach to history and thinking reflects both a strong Persian nationalist feeling and the exciting ferment of contemporary religious and cosmological ideas already mentioned in regard to al-Muṭahhar al-Maqdisī. Miskawayh wished his general history, the *Tajārib al-umam wa-taʾqīb al-himam*, *Experiences of the Nations and the Consequences of Human Endeavours*, indeed to serve as an example for the reader, so that in the earlier part of his book he eliminated periods, such as the Antediluvian one, knowledge of which was too uncertain to provide any object lessons for readers in his own times, and started with what was, in his view, the oldest recorded history, that of the Persian kings. He likewise omitted retailing the careers and miracles of the

²³ As is emphasized by W. Madelung in his "Abū Ishāq al-Šābiʿ on the Alids of Tabaristān and Gilān," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 26 (1967), pp. 17–21.

²⁴ I.e., Hilāl b. al-Muḥassin and his son Ghars al-Niʿma; see C. E. Bosworth, "Ghars al-Niʿma b. Hilāl al-Šābiʿs *Kitāb al-Hafawāt al-nādira* and Būyid History," in *Felix Arabicus Luminosus Britannicus: Essays in Honour of Professor A. F. L. Beeston's Eightieth Birthday* (Reading, 1991), pp. 129–41.

prophets, not excluding those of Muḥammad, since such exceptional, spiritually gifted people could not serve as exemplars for ordinary people facing the problems of everyday life. When he came to his own time, his position in the Būyids' *diwān*, at the center of events within the Persian lands, enabled him to give many chancery and diplomatic documents in full, and he has many incisive personal comments and verdicts on the characters and motives of contemporary rulers and statesmen, this being consonant with his overall aim of providing moral examples for succeeding generations and of demonstrating the value of history as a guide to right behaviour.²⁵

Miskawayh's younger contemporary Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) worked at the opposite, eastern end of the Persian world. One wonders how a region like Khwārazm, almost an island of Iranian ethnicity and culture in what was becoming a sea of Turkishness in the surrounding steppes, nurtured such a polymath; it may be that the destruction of the old Khwarazmian culture laid at the door of the invading Muslim Arabs was not so complete as to render the appearance of a figure like Bīrūnī impossible. His historical writings include what seems to have been, from its surviving fragment in the *Mujalladāt* of the Ghaznavid historian Bayhaqī, a remarkably detailed history of his own land, and his *al-Āthār al-bāqiya*, which centers on the chronological aspect of history, the eras and calendars of the various nations of the civilized world. The latter work also brought a new development in history writing, taken over from astronomy and the natural sciences, sc. the presentation of information in tabular form, the forerunner of the later specialized historical *taqwīms*. Bīrūnī's own attitude toward historical sources (in which, however, as a good Muslim, he had to make an exception for the Koran) was that they should be approached with intelligent skepticism, entailing a comparison and critical assessment of pieces of information in the light of their conformability to nature and reason, so far as was humanly possible and so far as the survival of historical materials permitted.²⁶

All these authors fell within the original Islamic tradition of history writing in Arabic, and ethnically Iranian historians like them continued to write significant works in Arabic until Mongol times

²⁵ Rosenthal, *History*, pp. 141–42.

²⁶ See *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, art. "Bīrūnī," especially sections i, "Life" (C. Edmund Bosworth), and vi, "History and Chronology" (David Pingree); George Saliba, "Al-Bīrūnī and the Sciences of his Time," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Religion, Learning and Science in the ʿAbbāsid Period*, ed. M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 405–23.

and beyond. One need only mention the importance for the history of the Great Seljuqs in Persia and Iraq of the *Zubdat al-nusra wa-nukhbat al-'usra* of al-Faṭḥ b. 'Alī al-Bundārī al-Iṣfahānī (d. in the mid seventh/thirteenth century?), which was the abridgement of a lost Arabic history of the Great Seljuqs by 'Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, itself enshrining the equally lost memoirs of the high official Anūshirvān b. Khālīd (d. 532 or 533/1137–39); these memoirs may well have been as detailed and revealing of the workings of the Seljuq *dīwāns* and of court life as the *Mujalladāt* of Bayhaqī (see below) are for their Ghaznavid equivalents.²⁷ The work some three centuries later of Ibn 'Arabshāh has already been mentioned above, p. 223.

But with the fifth/eleventh century the use of the Persian language begins to burgeon, starting, as already noted with regard to Bal'amī's translation of Tabarī, in the eastern Persian lands. One factor at work here seems to be the continued strength of the Persian national tradition in the East compared with the West, encouraged by the Sāmānids and their patronage of Persian as a vehicle for creative literary expression, seen in the poetry of the time, which was brought to a high level by the Sāmānids' successors south of the Oxus, the Turkish Ghaznavids. The appearance of the Turks – exemplified in the Ghaznavids, the Qarakhanids, the Seljuqs, and the Khwārazm Shāhs – is a second factor in the rise of Persian as a cultural medium, a process which eventually made Persian the second language of the then Islamic world, with a geographical penumbra from Anatolia in the West to Bengal in the East. The Turks, with a very limited cultural background of their own, embraced Persian culture enthusiastically, encouraging the use of Persian for official documents, accepting Bal'amī's version of Tabarī as their basic source for general historical information (as the numerous manuscript copies and adaptations of this work, followed later by Turkish translations, attest²⁸), and grafting on to their Turkish background the "Iranian" rather than the "Turanian" aspects of the Persian national epic. Thus after the first and second generations, the rulers of the Seljuq dynasties and their Atabegs are found not only with the traditional Turkish personal

names like Arslan, Sanjar, and Toghrl̄, but also with heroic Persian ones like Kay Kāwūs, Kay Qubād̄h, Pahlavān, Bahrām, and Hazārāsp; for the branch of the Seljuqs established at Konya in Rūm, such Persian names were to become standard.

Hence an increasing use of Persian for history writing begins with the Ghaznavids, in whose chancery the use of Arabic seems to have fought a gradually losing battle during the course of the fifth/eleventh century.²⁹ The continued use at the outset of Arabic at its most florid and opaque, in the shape of Abū Naṣr al-'Uṭbī's history of the exploits of the great Sultan Maḥmūd and his father Sebūktigin, *al-Ta'rīkh al-Yamīnī*, is overtaken by the memoirs in Persian, the *Mujalladāt*, of the chancery official Abu 'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī (d. 470/1077), from the surviving part of which the day-to-day events, and sometimes even the hour-to-hour ones, of life at the Ghaznavid court or in the rulers' military encampments can be reconstructed in amazing detail, and also, more or less contemporaneously, by the straightforward universal history, the *Zayn al-akhbār*, of Gardīzī (writing in the 440s/1050s), notable for the first appearance in a fully extant historical work of chapters specifically devoted to the steppe origins of the different Turkish tribes of central Asia and Siberia.³⁰ It seems that being one of the nations of the world which were known to have contributed to human civilization (e.g., the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Indians, or the Chinese) was no longer a necessary requirement for notice by writers on world history, given the prominence now of the Turkish slave commanders or tribal chiefs as rulers of such a large area of the Islamic world and the entry of the Turkish peoples into the scheme of Islamic salvation history. A further sign of the times, from the fifth/eleventh century onwards, was the appearance of Persian translations of works originally written in Arabic. Bīrūnī (who must himself have been trilingual in Khwarazmian, New Persian, and Arabic) wrote, it seems, almost exclusively in Arabic, the language par excellence of science, and in his book on pharmacology,

²⁹ Attempts were made by Maḥmūd's vizier Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Maymandī to revive the use of Arabic in the Ghaznavid chancery (see Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 291, and C. E. Bosworth, "Early Sources for the History of the First Four Ghaznavid Sultans," *Islamic Quarterly*, 7 (1965), p. 14, but he was clearly swimming against the tide, and by the end of this same century we even find Persian used epigraphically for the sultans (see Alessio Bombaci, *The Kūfic Inscription in Persian verses in the Court of the Royal Palace of Mas'ūd III at Ghazni*, ISMEO Reports and Memoirs [Rome, 1966]).

³⁰ See, in general, Bosworth, "Early Sources for the History of the First Four Ghaznavid Sultans," pp. 5–14. Gardīzī's information on the Turks was extensively utilized by V. Minorsky in his *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazi on China, the Turks and India* (London, 1942).

²⁷ See C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature, a Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London, 1927–90), I, 254–56; C. E. Bosworth, *Elr*, art. "Anūshirvān Kāshānī." Most interestingly, al-Bundārī was furthermore the translator into Arabic of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*, completed and dedicated to the Ayyūbid sultan al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Sharaf al-Dīn 'Isā of Damascus in 621/1224, extant and printed at Cairo (see F. C. de Blois, *Persian Literature, a Bio-Bibliographical Survey, VIII, Poetry to ca. A.D. 1100* (London, 1992), p. 149).

²⁸ See F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 66–67, 410.

the *Kitāb al-Ṣaydala*, he inveighs against the attempts to use the less precise and less lexically rich Persian for scientific purposes. But his work on astrology, the *Kitāb al-Taḥḥīm li-awā'il ṣinā'at al-ta'nīm*, *Book of Instruction in the Basic Principles of the Science of Astrology*,³¹ was at a very early date, certainly within the century of its composition, rendered into Persian, though probably not by Bīrūnī himself.³² At the opening of the seventh/thirteenth century, 'Uṭbī's *Yamīnī*, by now famed for the dazzling pyrotechnics of its style but incomprehensible as a historical source for all but those with a most advanced knowledge of high Arabic, was turned by Abū Sharaf Jurbādhqānī shortly after 602/1205–1206 into plain, intelligible Persian, and it was this version which later authors, like Rashīd al-Dīn, used, and not the Arabic original; and even a straightforward piece of Arabic historiography like the second, purely historical part of Ibn al-Ṭīqtaqā's *Kitāb al-Fakhri* (written in 701/1302) was within a generation of its composition turned into Persian for an Atabeg of Luristān.³³

So far we have largely considered history writing on a grand scale, general histories or histories of rulers and dynasties whose power extended over whole regions of the Persian lands, what might be termed macro-history. But side by side with this there flourished in medieval Persia a micro-history, the genre of local history writing. This was not unknown elsewhere in the Islamic world of the time: naturally for the two Ḥaramayn, the spiritual centers of the universe for Muslims, and notably for Syrian cities like Damascus and Aleppo,³⁴ although in all these cases the approach was usually biographical, i.e., through the lives of the outstanding statesmen, 'ulamā', and litterateurs of the place in question. But the special florescence of the genre in Persia may have been a reflection of the vitality of town life, above all in eastern Persia, which possessed vigorous centers of Sunnī orthodox scholarship, groups of 'Alid Sayyids in certain places, and a general sense of positive Islamic feeling and activism generated by the proximity to the northeast and east of the *Dār al-Kufr*, the abode of unbelief, against which *ghuzāt* and *muṭṭawwi'ūn*, fighters for the faith and volunteers, could work off their spirits of bellicose piety.³⁴

³¹ G. Lazard, *La Langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane* (Paris, 1963), pp. 58–62.

³² See Edward G. Browne, "The *Tajārīb*-i-Salaf, a Persian Version of the Arabic *Kitāb al-Fakhri*", in *JRAS, Centenary Supplement Volume* (1924), pp. 245–54.

³³ For which the monumental works of Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn al-'Adīm are of course outstanding.

³⁴ See C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids, Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 12–15.

These local histories comprise both histories of provinces and regions, e.g., Khurasan (already mentioned in connection with the lost work of Sallāmī) and Sistan, and also histories of individual towns and cities. In certain cases, such that of Nishapur in Khurasan, we possess histories of the city from three or four different authors. Often the original local history would be continued by later hands – sometimes anonymously or by persons known only hazily – for a further century or two, as happened with the histories of Bukhara, Nishapur, and Sistan. Such books frequently contained material on the merits and outstanding qualities, the *manāqib* and *fadā'il*, of the place in question, its special crops, manufactures, products, etc., and on the notable persons which it had produced, above all scholars and literary men. Sometimes the information conveyed is almost entirely biographical, so that, despite the existence of several works on the 'ulamā' of Nishapur, we learn less than might be expected from them on the course of political and military events affecting the city. Nevertheless, in many other cases there is a considerable amount of information on such events: what notable figures stayed or passed through there, the appearance of armies, natural disasters such as earthquakes, plagues, and famines, etc. Thus the regional history in Persian of Sistan, by an unknown author of the Seljuq period, concentrates mainly on a narrative of political and dynastic occurrences, becoming at the same time a special history of the province's most celebrated line of local rulers, the Ṣaffārids. The atmosphere of the whole work is redolent of local Sagzī patriotism, regarding the house of Ya'qūb and 'Amr b. al-Layth and their epigoni with approval as defenders of the province's interests, whereas the general, court-oriented, Sunnī orthodox sources for Persian history condemn the Ṣaffārids as plebeian adventurers and bandits who openly defied the 'Abbāsīd caliphs and treated them with contempt as fainéants.³⁵ The history of Fars in Persian by Ibn al-Balkhī (early sixth/twelfth century) likewise expresses local attitudes in its detailed survey of the topography and history of the province, whilst the *Ta'rikh-i Kirmān* of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm is a special history of the branch of Seljuq amīrs who ruled over Kirmān for more than a century in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries, forming the first of a notable and very informative series of local histories of the city of Kirmān proper and of Yazd which were composed in later times. There are

³⁵ C. E. Bosworth, "The Tāhirids and Ṣaffārids," in *The Cambridge History of Iran. IV. From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. R. N. Frye (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 107–108; C. E. Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistan and the Malikis of Nimruz (247/861 to 949/1542–3)* (Costa Mesa and New York, 1994), pp. 13–16.

several regional histories of the geographically and politically very fragmented Caspian region, both of the coastal plains and the mountainous interior of the Elburz, and the historiographical tradition there continues up to the eleventh/seventeenth century with writers on Ṭabaristān-Māzandarān, Gurgān and Daylam, such as the sixth-/twelfth-century historian Ibn Isfandiyyār and the ninth-/fifteenth-century one Zahr al-Dīn Mar'ashī; all this rich material provided a basis for the detailed researches on the history of the Caspian region begun by the Russian scholar Bernhard Dorn in the mid nineteenth century and continued by H. L. Rabino di Borgomale in the first half of the present century.

In addition to these mainly district or provincial dynasties, there were, as already mentioned in regard to Nishapur and Bukhara, town histories. The rich assemblage of biographical material in the histories of Nishapur, mainly composed in Arabic and taking as their starting point the *Ta'rikh Nayshābūr* of al-Ḥākim Ibn al-Bayyī' (d. 405/1014), itself lost but much continued and abridged over the next three or more centuries,³⁶ has enabled Richard Bulliet to build up a remarkably detailed picture of the social and religious history of the leading families of that city during the Sāmānid, Ghaznavid, and Seljuq periods,³⁷ although its political and military history has to be put together from the general histories of eastern Persia and its dynasties. A local history of a town of only modest size near Nishapur, the *Ta'rikh-i Bayhaq*, was composed in Persian by Zahr al-Dīn Ibn Funduq (d. 565/1170), who also continued in Arabic 'Utbi's *Yamīnī*. His history of his native town, the modern Sabzavar, combines both biographical material, e.g., on the settlement at Bayhaq of leading Arab families, including several families of *sayyids*, with information of a straight historical type on the town's role in the general history of Khurasan during the Sāmānid, Ghaznavid, and Seljuq periods.³⁸ Further histories exist for Bukhara, originally composed in Arabic in the later fourth/tenth century for an amīr of the Sāmānids by Muḥammad Narshakhī, now known through a Persian epitome of two centuries later; for Qum, by Ḥasan Qummī, of which only a later Persian translation of the Arabic original (this last apparently written

in 378/988–89) survives; one on the *mahāsīn* or beauties of Isfahan by Māfarrukhī (writing in 421/1030), extant both in the Arabic original and in a later, enlarged Persian translation; on Shiraz, by Ibn Zarkūb Shīrāzī (completed in Persian in 744/1343–44); on Herat, by Mu'īn al-Dīn Isfīzārī Zamchī (written in Persian in 897/1491–92); on the *faḍā'il* of Balkh, originally in Arabic but now known only in a later Persian version, by the Shaykh al-Islām Safī al-Dīn Balkhī (fl. in the sixth/twelfth century); etc. It is noteworthy that many of the earlier of these histories were first composed in Arabic, but then had Persian translations or epitomes – presumably aimed at a wider audience than the narrow circle of those scholars literate in Arabic – made from them, often with continuations; and not infrequently, it has been the latter versions, rather than the Arabic originals, which have survived till today.

The new direction of Persian historiography taken in the Seljuq and Khwārazm Shāhī periods, one more in tune with the intelligence and the needs of the Turkish rulers of the land, received a further impetus from the sudden irruption into the Islamic world in the seventh/thirteenth century of a race more uncivilized and barbaric than the Turks – who had gradually filtered into the Islamic lands at a time when they were gradually becoming Islamized – that is, the Mongols. Once the new power was established in the eastern half of the Islamic world, the court officials and chroniclers of the Mongols had the task of glorifying the origins and recording the achievements of their masters whilst still observing the ruins of so many Muslim cities and the long-term deleterious effects of Mongol devastation on social and economic life. This must have been an incongruity felt by 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī (d. 681/1283) when he composed for the destroyer of Baghdad, Hūlegū, his *Ta'rikh-i Jahān-gushāy*, *History of the World-Conqueror*. As a Muslim raised in the traditional Perso-Islamic cultural tradition, he cannot but inwardly have regarded the violence of the pagan Mongols with abhorrence, but he had to produce some sort of justification for events, and this he put forward in the shape of the Mongols as instruments of the divine will, often inscrutable but raised up as a scourge by the disobedience of the Muslims to God's laws and the deviations of many of them, such as the Ismā'īlīs; the destruction and deaths which they brought about could even be seen as a blessing in disguise, in that so many Muslims were thereby vouchsafed the martyr's crown. Writing his history in a tediously florid and inflated Persian style, so different from the simplicity of that of his predecessors, Juwaynī incorporated the chancery style of Persian, with its full battery of rhetorical devices,

³⁶ See Richard N. Frye, "City Chronicles of Central Asia and Khurasan: The *Ta'rikh-i Nīshāpūr*," in *60. doğum yılı münasebetiyle Zeki Velidi Togan'a armağan: Symbolae in honorem Z. V. Togan* (Istanbul, 1950–55), pp. 405–20.

³⁷ R. W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

³⁸ See Qari Sayyid Kalimullah Husaini, "The Life and Works of Zahiru 'd-Din al-Bayhaqi, the Author of the *Tarikh-i-Bayhaq*," *Islamic Culture*, 28 (1954), pp. 297–318.

into Persian historiography, thereby influencing this genre of writing for centuries to come and making history an arcane preserve for the restricted class of *'ulamā'* and *kuttāb*, a science to be savored for its fine style rather than as a means of the intelligible communication of information.³⁹

Only his younger contemporary and likewise servant of the Mongol Khans, the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh (d. 718/1318), formerly a physician and a convert from Judaism, hence no product of the traditional Islamic educational system, followed the older practice of simplicity of language and style for his universal history, conceived on a grand scale comparable only with that of Tabarī's four centuries before, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, *Compendium of Histories*. In this, commissioned by the Il-Khan Öljeytū, Rashīd al-Dīn was set the formidable task of compiling a history of all the peoples of Eurasia with whom the Mongols had come into contact. Such diverse groups as the Chinese and Indians had already been treated by previous Muslim historians and geographers, though not in such depth and with such a sophisticated approach to cultural history as now in his sections on them; but those on the Franks and their emperors and Popes dealt with entirely novel topics, and thereby make his history the first real general history of the Old World (excluding the almost totally unknown sub-Saharan Africa) compiled by a Muslim writer.⁴⁰

Rashīd al-Dīn's achievement in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* thus marks the apogee of Islamic historiography in the premodern period, and not merely of medieval Persian scholarship in this field. The Persian tradition had broadened the Arab-Islamic one by adding its own special world-view, one which accepted the orthodox Islamic view of the *Dār al-Islām* as the core of human civilization and of its Prophet as a beacon for those of mankind destined for salvation, but which could also recognize, perhaps because of its cultural extension amongst such races as the Turks and Mongols, the valid contributions of other ages and other races to the sum of human experience and knowledge; and herein, I would suggest, lies the Persians' major contribution to the muse Clio.

³⁹ See D. O. Morgan, "Persian Historians and the Mongols", in D. O. Morgan, ed., *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), pp. 113-18; D. O. Morgan *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 16-18.

⁴⁰ See Morgan, "Persian History and the Mongols", pp. 119-21; Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 18-21.

7 · The influence of Persian language and literature among the Turks

GERHARD DOERFER

In 1948 Faḡr al-Dīn Šādmān wrote:

The Europeans are no barefooted thirsty nomadic Arabs or drunken and bloodthirsty Turks and Mongols who, after their invasions and slaughters descending from their horses and reposing for some time, gradually became enchanted by the embroideries of the carpets and fell in love with the charm of the gardens of Iran . . . and somewhat afterward became tamed by the poems of Rūmī, Sa'dī and Ḥāfez.¹

This supercilious attitude toward the Turks is – alas – characteristic of many educated persons in Persia, a fact of which I became well aware when traveling through that country. Of course, it has as little justification as any other national stereotype. From the eighth century we find Turkish inscriptions in Mongolia written in a highly poetic literary style. To quote from one of them:

When the blue sky above
and the brown earth beneath
came into being,
between the twain
mankind arose.
Over mankind
my ancestors:
King Bumyn, King Istemi
seated themselves.
Seating themselves
noblemen's and commoners'
peace and law
hold they fast,
put they in order.

¹ Basile Nikitine, "Farhang-šenāsi ou L'Europe vue de Téhéran," in *Charisteria Orientalia praecipue ad Persiam pertinentia*, ed. Felix Tauer, Věra Kubičková, and Ivan Hrbek (Prague, 1956), p. 212.

From the eighth century too, Manichaeism and Buddhism spread among the Turkish nations, and from the eleventh century (i.e., well before Rūmī, Sa'dī, and Hāfēz) Turkish poetry is documented which, as is clear from historical events mentioned in them, goes back to much earlier times. The Turkish influence on China is well known:² the music, tents, dress, and, above all, the so-called *yüeh-fü* style of poetry³ characteristic of Turkish and Mongolian tribes were of great importance in China from the sixth to the eighth century.

However, it cannot be denied that since the earliest times the Turkish and Iranian nations lived close to each other, developing a similar culture, and it seems that – at least in most cases – the influence came from the Iranian side: the “animal style” of decoration, weapons, clothing, the stirrup, ownership marks, and the use of mare's milk, for example, were common features throughout the steppe area. Many Old Turkish words may be loans from Iranian, such as *tāna*, “heifer” (cf. Avestan *daēnav-*, “female of larger quadruped”), *yat*, “rain magic, rain stone” (cf. Avestan *yātu*, “witchcraft”),⁴ or the Old Turkish title *šad*.⁵ The origin of these earliest loan-words is often veiled in obscurity, so that one can conjecture an Iranian source without being able to attribute it to any particular Iranian language or form.

The Sogdians, above all, were of great importance for Turkish civilization. Many Turkish words are of Sogdian origin, most of them belonging to the field of religion, such as *ažun*, “world,” *učmaq*, “paradise,” *tamuğ*, “hell,” and *nom*, “religious law,” a Greek word which, by Sogdian mediation, has wandered to Turkish, and via Turkish to Mongolian and Manchu.

The Sogdians also had the lead in Old Turkish administration. A Chinese source reports on them: “The Turks themselves are simple-minded and short-sighted, and dissension may have been roused

² See Mau-Tsai Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-kü)* (2 vols., Wiesbaden, 1958), I, pp. 465–68.

³ See Muhaddere N. Özerdim, “M.S. 4-5inci asırlarda Çin'in şimalinde hanedan kuran Türklerin şiirleri,” in *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 20, cilt 2:1 (1943), pp. 89–98; F. Tökei, “Poésie chinoise et poésie des peuples du Nord,” *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 8 (1958), pp. 313–19; Hans H. Fraenkel, “Yüeh-fü Poetry,” in Cyril Birch, ed., *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley, Calif., 1974), pp. 69–107; James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago and London, 1962); Wai-Lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry* (Berkeley, Calif., 1976).

⁴ Pentti Aalto, “Iranian Contacts of the Turks in Pre-Islamic Times,” in L. Ligeti, ed., *Studia Turcica* (Budapest, 1971), pp. 29–37.

⁵ Alessio Bombaci, “On the Ancient Turkish Title ‘Šaš,’” in *Gururajāmāñjarikā: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Tucci* 1 (Naples, 1974), pp. 167–93; Adriano Rossi, “In margine a On the Ancient Turkish Title ‘Šaš,’” in *Studia Turcologica memoriae Alexii Bombaci dicata* (Naples, 1982), pp. 407–50.

among them. Unfortunately many Sogdians live among them who are cunning and insidious; they teach and instruct the Turks.”⁶ This report from the early seventh century is still confirmed by Maḥmūd al-Kāšgārī, a central Asian Turkish philologist of the eleventh century, who quoted the Turkish proverb *tatsız türk bolmas, başsız bürk bolmas*, “without Iranians, the Turks amount to nothing, without a head, a cap is nothing.”⁷ The oldest literary documents of the Turkish kings were written in Sogdian, namely the inscription of Bugut (belonging to 581),⁸ or were bi- or trilingual: the inscriptions of Sevre (762)⁹ and Qara Balğasun (about 821).¹⁰ But Middle Persian was also of great importance; we possess, e.g., a description of an Uighur royal court belonging to about 830.¹¹ And the Iranian influence, now also documented in New Persian, increased after the conversion of Turks to Islam, which started in the tenth century.

This was the commencement of a long Irano-Turkish, and above all Persian-Turkish, symbiosis in which in most cases the Persians were the leading, the creative element, but which produced at its end what Bausani has described aptly as “un identico mondo culturale musulmano,” “an identical Muslim world of culture.”¹²

The Irano-Turkish symbiosis was, so to speak, preformed by a convergence of the structure of the languages; in all cases the Persian structure resembled the Turkish one – without having been influenced by it. Three of many examples are: the extinction of grammatical gender; the indefinite accusative identical to the nominative; and the use of the singular after numerals, and there are many other features of this type.¹³ Some Iranian languages have been heavily influenced by Turkish; Northern Tajiki, e.g., may be called a Turkish language in statu nascendi: it has even borrowed case suffixes, and its syntax is Turkish.¹⁴ Furthermore, on the one hand, North-West Iranian, to which Kurdish belongs, but also the many Tati dialects which our

⁶ Sergey G. Klyastorniy and Vladimir Aronovič Livšic, “The Sogdian Inscription of Bugut Revised,” *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 20 (1972), pp. 69–102.

⁷ Maḥmūd al-Kāšgārī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Luyāt al-Turk)* (3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1982–5), I, p. 273, II, p. 103.

⁸ Klyastorniy and Livšic, “The Sogdian Inscription.”

⁹ Sergey G. Klyastorniy and Vladimir Aronovič Livšic, “Une inscription inédite turque et sogdienne: La Stèle de Sevre (Gobi méridional),” *Journal Asiatique*, 259 (1971), pp. 11–20. ¹⁰ For bibliography see *ibid.*

¹¹ F. W. K. Müller, “Ein Doppelblatt aus einem manichäischen Hymnenbuch (Maḥmāmag),” *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1912 (Berlin, 1913).

¹² Antonino Pagliaro and Alessandro Bausani, *Storia della letteratura persiana* (Milan, 1960), p. 752.

¹³ Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische Lehnwörter im Tadschikischen* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 58–60. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 60–63.

honored colleague Professor Yarshater has so perfectly investigated,¹⁵ were of great importance for the language of the Mongols in Iran in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,¹⁶ while on the other hand, Kurdish, above all in its western dialects, contains a high proportion of Turkish loanwords. *Persian*, however, has been far less influenced by Turkish.

We may distinguish two social layers within the Turkish element which has entered Persian. The first, the low layer, may already be represented in the above-mentioned change in linguistic structure. But as well as that, the names of types of food are frequently Turkish, e.g., *dolma*, "meat in grape-leaves,"¹⁷ an Osmanli word which is documented over a wide area, reaching from Scandinavia, the Balkans, and Hungary to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in central Asia. As I have observed elsewhere: "Osmanlılar dünyayı kılıçla değil, tabahatla feth etmişlerdir," "The Osmanlis have conquered the world, not with the sword, but with their culinary art." The Mullā stories,¹⁸ too, popular entertaining anecdotes, are of Osmanli origin. Nowadays they have reached the comic papers of China, in which the *afandi* (that is, Turkish *efendi*) plays an eminent role. The second, the high layer, has a totally different origin. We must consider the fact that, from about 977 until 1925, hence for about 1,000 years, Turkish (and Mongolian) dynasties reigned over Iran. The Turkish vocabulary in Persian belongs preponderantly to the fields of government, state, law, army, warfare, armaments, and booty. Turkish was the language of the soldiers and the court. While the court of Delhi, i.e., the Turkish court of India, spoke Persian, the official language of the Safavi court (sixteenth century onward) was Azerbaijan Turkish, so that Kaempfer¹⁹ remarked in 1685 "ut pene nunc turpe sit in Persiā viro alijucius nominis ignorare Turcicam . . . ita ab exteris diligitur quae in ipsā patriā sordet magnatibus," "that it is almost ugly in Persia for a man of any renown to ignore Turkish, and so that [the Persian language] is esteemed abroad which in its own country is despised by the noblemen." Many aristocratic titles were Turkish, just as the English titles

¹⁵ See, e.g., *A Grammar of Southern Tati Dialects* (The Hague and Paris, 1969).

¹⁶ Gerhard Doerfer, "Zu mongolisch Keyenüwe," *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 28 (1974), pp. 99–100.

¹⁷ Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, III (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 203–204.

¹⁸ Ulrich Marzolph and Ingeborg Baldauf, "Hodscha Nasreddin," in Rolf Wilhelm Brednich et al., eds., *Enzyklopädie der Märchen* (Berlin and New York, 1990), VI, pp. 1127–51.

¹⁹ Engelbert Kempfer (sic!), *Amoenitatum exoticarum politico-physico-mediarum fasciculi V, observationes & descriptiones rerum persicarum & Ulterioris Asiae, auctore Engelberto Kaempfero* (D. Lemgoviae, 1712), p. 144.

to a great extent belonged to the language of the Norman conquerors.²⁰ In short, Persian was the language of the poets and of the educated middle class; Turkish was the language of the army and the aristocracy.

So much for the Turkish influence on Persian. The Persian influence on Turkish, however, was much stronger. It appears both in the West (Azerbaijani and, to a smaller extent, Osmanli)²¹ and in the East (central Asia, above all the territory of modern Uzbekistan).²² And this influence increased in the course of time. Whereas central Asian Karakhanid (eleventh century) contained only 1.6 percent of Persian loanwords in its texts, Early Chaghatay (fourteenth century) contained 26 percent, and in classical Chaghatay (fifteenth century) the Persian vocabulary amounted to between 50 and 60 percent. The same holds true for Osmanli: while Sultān Veled, a poet of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, employed only 18 percent of Persian loanwords, Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn (late fourteenth century) used 49 percent, 'Aufī (fifteenth century) 60 percent, and Nev'ī (sixteenth century) 73 percent.²³ (Incidentally, I always count lexemes of Arabic origin as Persian, because the Arabic element almost always entered the Turkish languages via Persian. There is a small layer of direct Arabic loans in eastern Anatolia,²⁴ but even these words, at least partly, may have entered Anatolian Turkish via Kurdish, which is also an Iranian language, after all.)

The Persian vocabulary in Turkish is old, as is clear from its preservation of *ō* and *ē* (*vāv-e majhūl* and *ya-ye majhūl*) in such words as Osmanli, Uzbek *dost* (Turkmen *döst*), "friend," corresponding to modern Persian *dūst*. Some words may even belong to the twelfth century or earlier, e.g., *çıra*, "resinous wood" from Persian *čērāg*, "lamp": the loss of *-g* must have occurred in Osmanli/Azerbaijani not after the eleventh century.²⁵ Persian has, to some extent, changed the structure of the two Turkish territories. In Chaghatay, e.g., we find

²⁰ Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, p. 156.

²¹ Andreas Tietze, "Persische Ableitungssuffixe im Azerosmanischen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 59/60 (1963/4), pp. 154–200; Andreas Tietze, "Persian Loanwords in Anatolian Turkish," *Oriens*, 20 (1967), pp. 125–68.

²² See *Uzbeksko-russkii slovar*, ed. A. K. Borovkov et al. (Moscow, 1959).

²³ See also Claudia Römer, "Der Einfluß der Übersetzungen aus dem Persischen auf die Entwicklung des Osmanischen im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 73 (Vienna, 1981), pp. 89–114.

²⁴ Andreas Tietze, "Direkte arabische Entlehnungen im anatolischen Türkisch," in Janos Eckmann ed., *Jean Deny Armağanı, Mélanges Jean Deny* (Ankara, 1958), pp. 255–333.

²⁵ Gerhard Doerfer, "Das Vorosmanische," in György Hazai, ed., *Handbuch der türkischen Sprachwissenschaft*, I (Budapest, 1990), pp. 33–34.

such conjunctions and prepositions as *ki*, "that," *agar*, "when," *čünki*, "because," *tā*, "until."²⁶ A sentence like "farqi-din tā qadem füsün u firib," "from top to toe enchantment and deceit" (Nāwā'i, sixteenth century), has the same form even in modern Uzbek and is easily understood by every Persian (who has only to realize that *farqi-din* is equivalent to Persian *az farq*). Other Persian elements, such as *eẓāfat*, *yā-ye ešārat*, and *yā-ye vaḥdat*, are employed only in poetry or in certain set phrases.

In Osmanli and Azerbaijani we must distinguish two social layers. The higher, the poetic (or educated) level, employs Persian words to excess, preserving them in a form as close to Persian as possible. Many words are abstract, mystical or rather general terms, and they are preponderantly of Arabic origin. The lower level, on the other hand, contains word relating to basic economic activities, such as agriculture and gardening, and domestic concerns, such as cooking, clothing, the market and family life, mostly of Persian origin.²⁷ The forms of the words have often been changed, that is, adapted to the Turkish structure, so that, e.g., Persian *sagbān*, "dog-keeper," exists in two Osmanli forms: the regular development *segban* and the form with vowel harmony, typical of Turkish, *seğmen*.

As Tietze²⁸ has shown, Osmanli and Azerbaijani have borrowed twenty Persian derivative suffixes which have become productive in these languages, i.e., which may be added also to Turkish roots. By chance, I have found the same number of such suffixes in Uzbek.²⁹ It is clear that the western Turkish languages, on the one hand, and central Asian Uzbek, on the other hand, have borrowed their Persian suffixes independently of each other: Osmanli and Azerbaijani from Western Persian, and Uzbek from Eastern Persian, generally called Tajiki, because Azerbaijani contains suffixes which are not found in Uzbek, as in düzengah, "plain" (with the Persian suffix -gāh added to Turkish düzen); on the other hand, Uzbek contains suffixes which are not found in Azerbaijani, such as -düz in etikdüz, "cobbler," with Tajiki -düz, "sewer," added to Turkish etik, "shoe." But at least five suffixes are common to the western and eastern forms of the Turkish languages, e.g., Persian *-dān*, "container," in Azerbaijani *süddān*, "milk jug," and in Uzbek *tuzdon*, "salt-cellar," or Azerbaijani *torpagšūnas*, "soil expert," and Uzbek *tilšunos*, "linguist," literally "language knower," which contain the Persian element *šunās*, "knower."

²⁶ Carl Brockelmann, *Osttürkische Grammatik der islamischen Literatursprachen Mittelasiens* (Leiden, 1954), pp. 159-60. ²⁷ See Tietze, "Persian Loanwords"

²⁸ "Persische Ableitungssuffixe."

²⁹ See *Uzbeksko-russkii slovar'*, particularly pp. 716-27.

The strength of Tajiki influence is proved by the fact that Uzbek has even borrowed prefixes, in contrast to the general Turkish word-structure. Here are some examples: *be-baş*, "disobedient, anarchic," that is, Tajiki *be*, "without," prefixed to Turkish *baş*, "chief"; *kam-suv*, "with little water" = Tajiki *kam-ob*; *no-tūgri*, "not correct" = Tajiki *no-durust*; *ser-suv*, "with much water" = Tajiki *ser-ob*.

Many calques from Persian have entered Turkish, e.g., Osmanli, Azerbaijani and *ıç*, "to take an oath," Uzbek *ont ıç*, literally "to drink an oath," from Persian *sowgand kordan*. In Old Turkish this is either *ant antiq*, "to swear an oath," or *ant bër*, literally "to give an oath." From the fourteenth century onward most Turkish languages show this calque with *ıç*, "to drink," but some of them have preserved the old construction with *bër*, "to give."³⁰

But it is, after all, the Persian vocabulary in the Turkish languages which impresses the linguist. It gave the poet the opportunity of making use of three streams of words: Turkish, Persian, and Arabic, which had flowed together in Old Osmanli and Chaghatay. And it allowed many puns (*tajnīs*). Here is a sentence from Bāqī, an Osmanli poet of the sixteenth century:³¹ "seḥāb-ı lütfün ābin tişne dillerden dirîğ étme," "Do not refuse the thirsty hearts or: the thirsty tongues the water or: the splendor from the clouds of your grace." Here we find two puns: *āb* (a Persian word) means both "water" and "splendor" and - more importantly - *dil* may be understood as Persian *dil*, "heart," or as Turkish *dil*, "tongue." And now the sentence may mean: "Do not refuse the thirsty hearts your grace (which vaults over us like clouds)," but also "Do not refuse the thirsty tongues the water of your clouds (of grace)"; and both versions make sense.

As I said earlier, there are two main centers of Iranian influence on the Turkish languages: Osmanli-Azerbaijani and Chaghatay-Uzbek. But there is another, minor, center, namely Turkmen.³² It contains many Persian (or Iranian) loanwords which are similar to those found in Uzbek, e.g., *atkāna*, "horse stable," *bibaş*, "anarchist," *bilimdār*, "learned person," and *gānķōr*, "bloodthirsty." But other words have originated independently, such as *ışgār*, "worker" (Persian *kārgar*), *düzdān*, "salt-cellar," with the typical Oghuz d- (cf. Uzbek *tuzdon*), or *nedoğri*, "not correct" (Uzbek *notūgri*), again with d- and beginning with an Iranian prefix, which is, however, not *nā*- (as in Uzbek), but *ne*-. This prefix has apparently been borrowed from an Iranian dialect

³⁰ Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 176.

³¹ See Jan Rypka, *Bāqī als Ghasedichter* (Prague, 1926), p. 146.

³² *Turkmensko-russkii slovar'*, ed. N. A. Baskakov et al. (Moscow, 1968).

of Khurasan; we may take into account Kurdish, which is spoken in large areas of Khurasan and Turkmenistan and where we find *ne-*, e.g., in *ne-kweš*, "sick,"³³ instead of Persian *nā-koš*.

Exact statistics are lacking so far, and it would be worthwhile to trace the paths which Persian loanwords have taken in central Asia, but these facts seem to be obvious:

(1) The number of Persian loanwords diminishes in true relation to the distance from Tajiki and Uzbek. Southern Kirgiz, e.g., close to Tajikistan, contains many Persian loanwords which are absent in the northern dialects of this language. And Karakalpak, spoken in the northern part of Uzbekistan, contains many more Persian elements than Kazakh, of which it is a dialect group.

(2) Tajiki loanwords have (at least in most cases) not been loaned directly, but via Uzbek. It cannot be an accident, e.g., that New Uighur³⁴ contains only such Tajiki loanwords or elements as are also contained in Uzbek, but far fewer of them; examples are *atkana*, "horse stable" (Turkmen, as we saw, *atkāna*, Uzbek *otkōna*, Kazakh, Karakalpak *atkana*, Kirgiz *atqana*), *natoğra*, "not correct" (with the typical change of -i to -a which is also found in Southern Kirgiz *natūra*),³⁵ and also *tuzdan*, "salt-cellar," *qankor*, "bloodthirsty," *tilšumas*, "linguist," etc. Kazakh,³⁶ too, contains only such loanwords as exist in Uzbek, and most of them are typical of the southeastern dialects of Kazakhstan, close to Uzbekistan, e.g., *beybas*, "anarchist," *žaradar*, "wounded," *kōmirkana*, "store of coals." But the Persian vocabulary in Kazakh and Kirgiz embraces the same word-fields as in Uzbek: education and science, astronomy and the calendar, state and rights, agriculture and geography, household and market, religion and concepts.

(3) Persian influence is recent in Kazakhstan and Kirgizistan; the Kirgiz, e.g., did not become Muslims before the sixteenth century.

(4) Whereas Uzbek (like Azerbaijani and Osmanli) has preserved all the Persian consonants, thus exhibiting a sound structure very similar to that of Persian, Turkmen, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kirgiz, and Uighur very often change the Persian sounds, replacing them by sounds which exist in Turkish; f-, e.g., becomes p- or b-; in Kazakh k becomes q-, g- becomes k-, and wa- becomes o-; *waṭan*, "native country," becomes *otan*, for instance.

³³ K. K. Kurdoev, *Kurdsko-russkii slovar'* (Moscow, 1960), p. 561, *nexwes*; in Khurasan Turkish (own investigation) *nečāš*, "sick," and similar forms are found, in Asadli, Kalāt-e Esfarāyēn, Zeyārat, Širvān, Qūcān, and Langar.

³⁴ Š. Kibirova and Ju. Cunvazo, *Uygursko-russkii slovar'* (Alma-Ata, 1961).

³⁵ B. M. Yunusaliev, *Kirgizskaya leksikologiya*, I (Frunze, 1959).

³⁶ L. Z. Rüsternov, *Qazirgi Qazaq tilindegi arab-parsī kirme sözleri* (Alma-Ata, 1982); S. K. Kenesbaev, *Mestnle osobennosti v kazakskom yazike* (Alma-Ata, 1973).

(5) Persian has found a competitor in Mongolian, and, generally speaking, the Mongolian influence diminishes as we go westward, whereas the Persian influence diminishes as we go eastward.³⁷ Yakut in East Siberia contains about 2,500 Mongolian words and many Mongolian suffixes (but very few Persian loanwords), while Kirgiz contains only 400 Mongolian words, Uzbek only 60, Turkmen 40, etc.

However, some Persian loanwords are found even in Siberia. The following are examples:

Quday, "the good God" (from Persian *qudāy*), occurs in the Turkish dialects of southern Siberia and, maybe, in the Yakut expression *orto kuday daydu*, "our earth," literally "the middle God earth."

Kōrmōs, "the bad God," is presumably from Persian *hormoz(d)*, "name of the Zoroastrian God." Here we see the influence of the Manichaean cosmological myth, in which Ohrmizd is one of the emanations of the Father of Light.³⁸ In southern Siberian folklore many echoes of Buddhism are found, too, e.g., *May-Tere*, "one of the first created, a helper of mankind"=Old Turkish *Maytrē*, "the Buddha of the future," or *Mandīšire*, "a warrior against the prince of hell"=Old Turkish *Manjuširi*, "the Buddha of wisdom." In all these cases the meaning has changed.

Mal, "property, cattle," is found in all Turkish languages, from Osmanli and Chuvash in the West to southern and eastern Siberia (Yakut).

Even such a universal word as *čāy*, "tea," of Chinese origin (*chá*), can be explained only by Persian mediation: it is well known that in Persian after the long vowels ā, ō, and ū variants with -y exist; even the name of the Mongol emperor Abaga appears in the Persian sources as Abāqā~Abāqāy.

Finally there is the fact that Persian *gūgerd*, "sulfur," appears in many Turkish languages as *kükürt*, from Turkey to southern Siberia. Its form suggests that it must belong to a very early period of borrowing, presumably Middle Persian.³⁹

As we have seen, many Turkish terms, e.g., those connected with the household and other fields of material culture, are loans from Persian, and this again means that the Turks have received many material objects from the Persians. But Turkish spiritual civilization, too, is unthinkable without Persian influence.

³⁷ V. I. Rassadin, *Mongolo-buryatskie zaïmstvovaniya v sibirskii tyurkskii yazıkak* (Moscow, 1980), pp. 92-94.

³⁸ Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete der Religion des Lichts* (Opladen, 1989), pp. 21, 44, 48.

³⁹ The normal development, e.g., in Osmanli, ought to be **gūgürti*.

The oldest Islamic Turkish poetical work is Yūsuf's *Qutadḡu Bilig* (*The Blessing of Knowledge*).⁴⁰ Written in 1068, it is a poem containing 6,645 verses with a moral content, containing advice to kings. No direct Persian model is known for it; however, the whole genre is typical of Persian poetry, resembling the Middle Persian *Pand-nāmak*. In the eleventh century we also find Šarīf's *Pand-nāma-ye Anūšīrvān*, and Abū Šakūr's *Afarīn-nāma* precedes the *Qutadḡu Bilig*.⁴¹ The meter of that great Turkish poem is *mutaqārib*, in this respect following Ferdowsī, whose metaphors and descriptions are sometimes imitated, and many calques taken from Persian decorate the work.⁴² The Turkish philologist Maḥmūd al-Kāšḡarī, too, was acquainted with Ferdowsī, although his poems are a mixture of genuine Turkish meters and 'arūz. In the fourteenth century the influence of Persian poetry increased. The Turkish works of this time are mostly either recasts of Persian poems or direct translations. Quṭb's *Kosrow o Šīrīn*, e.g., is an imitation of Neẓāmī, and a translation of 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliyā* belongs to the time.⁴³ Ferdowsī, Ḥāfeẓ, Sa'dī, Neẓāmī, Amīr Kōsrow, and Jāmī had a great influence on Turkish poetry. Many Chaghatay poets wrote Persian verses, too; and many Persian poets were presumably of Turkish origin, such as Mobārakšāh, Amīr Kōsrow, Sūzani, Manūchehri, and Rūmī.⁴⁴ On the other hand, knowledge of Turkish was scarce among the Persians; Jāmī, e.g., understood Turkish, but never wrote a verse in the language. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries even central Asian Turkish peasants spoke and understood Persian quite well, whereas the Persians did not speak Turkish. Navā'ī ascribes this fact to the intellectual grandeur of the Turks, who easily learn Persian, while the Persians are not able to master the rich and superior Turkish language. This, of course, is nonsense; Persian actually prevailed for two reasons: because of the – at that time – greater Persian-speaking population⁴⁵ and because of many centuries of civilization. Hence Navā'ī's anti-Persian pamphlet is written in a language whose vocabulary is two-thirds Persian. An

⁴⁰ Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, ed. Robert Dankoff (Chicago and London, 1983); cf. also *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta*, II (Aquis Mattiacis, 1964), p. 268. ⁴¹ Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), p. 144.

⁴² See Dankoff, ed., *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, pp. 10–12, 264–67.

⁴³ *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta*, II, pp. 280, 292, 305.

⁴⁴ See *Ta'rikk-i Fakhru'd-Din Mubārakshāh*, ed. E. Ross (London, 1927). For Amīr Kōsrow see Rypka *Iranian Literature*, p. 257; for Sūzani see Evgeniy Eduardovič Bertel, *Istoriya persidsko-tadžikskoy literatury* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 475–76. For Manūchehri see *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta*, II, p. 252. For Rūmī see Rypka, *Iranian Literature*, p. 242. Generally see Zeki Velidi Togan in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1:5:1 (Leiden and Cologne, 1963), p. 231.

⁴⁵ *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta*, II, p. 326.

enormous number of Persian works have in the course of time been translated into the Turkish languages, both in the East (Chaghatay and Kipchak) and in the west (Old Osmanli), whereas translations of Turkish works into Persian were late and rare phenomena.⁴⁶

As is well known, the Arabic 'arūd and the Persian 'arūz differ in many points. Persian poetry avoids some meters which in Arabic are quite frequent, such as *ṭawīl* (short, long, long, short, long, long, long). Furthermore, in Arabic poems the number of syllables is constant in each line; but only about a half of the syllables are fixed in quantity, i.e., must be either long or short. In Persian prosody, however, the number of syllables can vary, but the number of moras have to be constant, and the whole structure of the poem is much more fixed. Elwell-Sutton⁴⁷ quotes two lines of an Arabic poem whose first line (counted according to Persian rules) would consist of 18 moras and the second of 21, whereas the number of syllables is 12 in both lines. On the other hand, Ḥāfeẓ's verse

behīc dowr naḡwāhand yāft hošyāraš
čonīn ke Ḥāfeẓ-e mā mast-e bāda-ye azal-ast

in no epoch will one find reasonable ones
just so as our Ḥāfeẓ is drunk from the wine of eternity

has 10 syllables in the first line and 15 in the second, but the number of moras is invariably 22. The older Turkish prosody, e.g., *Qutadḡu Bilig*, and in Maḥmūd al-Kāšḡarī's verses,⁴⁸ still shows a constant number of syllables, but this is due to the influence of Turkish folk-poetry. And even here meters such as *ṭawīl* are avoided. In later Turkish poetry Persian over-long syllables (which count three moras, i.e., are equal to a long and a short syllable simultaneously) have been introduced, so that we find, e.g., the following lines in Nev'ī:⁴⁹

geh rāst ṭutdī sāḡarī geh kej o türk-i mest
ittürdi jilve šāḡ-i güle şanasın şaba

now that drunken Turk held the cup upright, now slanting;
you may think that the zephyr pushed the glittering twig of a rose.

We must also consider the fact that in the main Turkish languages the quantitative opposition of vowels had vanished from the twelfth century, because all long vowels were shortened. This means that an adaptation of the Arabic prosody in which about 50 percent of the

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 355, 375.

⁴⁷ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *The Persian Metres* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 126.

⁴⁸ Iya V. Stebleva, *Razvitie tyurkskiĭ poēticheskiĭ form v XI veke* (Moscow, 1971).

⁴⁹ Nev'ī, *Divan*, ed. Mertol Tulum and M. Ali Tanyeri (Istanbul, 1977), p. 232.

syllables are aneeps would have been much more suited to the pattern of the Turkish languages; but the Turks followed the Persians so faithfully that they even adopted a prosody which created many difficulties, which could be overcome only by employing many words of Persian origin. This just seems to be a celebration of Persian culture and a denigration of the Turks. Is there any justification in this? Is it the entire truth?

An old puzzle concerns the origin of the *robāʿī*, a poetical form well known both in Persia and among the Turks, and which was made famous by Fitzgerald in the Anglo-Saxon world. Different solutions have been proposed or are possible:

- (1) It originated in both groups independently. But the *robāʿī* has so typical a form and so typical a content that we may disregard this possibility.
- (2) It originated from China – but that is too far-fetched.
- (3) It has a purely Persian origin,
- (4) It has a purely Turkish origin.

There are some reasons in favor of solution (3): the oldest *robāʿīs* are documented in Persian, in the ninth century, and they resemble the Avestan *spenta-manyu* type of poetry. On the other hand we must remember that the cradle of Persian poetry was in Khurasan and Transoxania, i.e., in a Persian-Turkish contact zone; that many older Persian poets were of Turkish origin; that the rhyme, which is not just typical of the Avestan style, is genuinely Turkish; that we find a *robāʿī* already in Maḥmūd al-Kāšgarī's *Dīwān luḡāt al-turk*, although in this work the influence of Arabic civilization is much greater than that of Persia.⁵⁰ Furthermore, it is only in Turkish poetry that we find a variety of four-line meters, such as *tuyuḡ* or *mānī*; and, as mentioned above, the *yüeh-fü* poetry in China also has a typical Turkish form.

Thus I am inclined to propose a fifth solution: the *robāʿī* arose in a Persian-Turkish contact zone, possibly on the basis of the *spenta-manyu* type and a Turkish rhyme scheme aaba. The *robāʿī* has been created by the cooperation of two civilizations.

Another interesting meter is the *mostazād*. It is characterized by the fact that, in contrast to the Arabic and also to all the other meters of Persian prosody the lines vary in length: a line of 14 moras is always followed by a line of 6 moras; the rhyme scheme in both lines is aa ba ca da, etc. Navāʿī, who in spite of his disdain for the Persian language

was a great friend of and expert at Persian poetry, ascribes a Turkish origin to the *mostazād*. One may object that the oldest documented *mostazād* in Turkish poetry belongs to the fifteenth century (Gadāʿī, 1405–92), whereas the Persian poet Amīr Ḳosrow, who was the first to write *mostazāds*, lived much earlier (1253–1325). But deeper investigation shows us that meters with varying line lengths exist in the *yüeh-fü* poetry of the fifth century, and in the work of Maḥmūd al-Kāšgarī, the great central Asian Turkish philologist of the eleventh century, we find verses with varying line lengths too. Lastly, it is known that Amīr Ḳosrow's father was a Turk from Khurasan. Therefore we may conclude that the *mostazād* (or its preliminary forms) arose in the Turkish area, but it has been refined by the Persians and has won its ultimate form within the Persian civilization.

Civilization is founded on communication, and many great achievements have been made by Persian-Turkish cooperation, just as American civilization has found its special character by the shared work of so many peoples.⁵¹

⁵¹ For a general survey of the topic see also Lars Johanson, "Reproduktion, Widerstand und Anpassung: Zur lautlichen Iranisierung im Türkischen," in *Studia grammatica Iranica: Festschrift für Helmut Humbach*, ed. Rüdiger Schmitt and Prods Oktor Skjaervø (Munich, 1996), pp. 185–201.

⁵⁰ See n. 7 above: the language of the *Dīwān* is Arabic; one of Kāšgarī's poems is a translation of a poem written by the Arab poet Farazdaq. See Togan, *Handbuch*, p. 231.

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